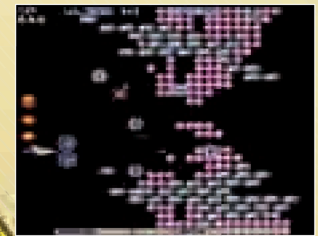
OLD!

BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO CLASSIC GAMES

retro GAMER™

THE NEW LOOK RETRO GAMER BACK, BIGGER & BETTER

"Destroy them all!"
GRADIUS
RETRO GAMER BLASTS OPEN KONAMI'S CLASSIC SPACE SHOOT-'EM-UP FRANCHISE



AMSTRAD | … CLAIR | NEO-GEO | SONY | COIN-OP | M…

WWW.RETROGAMER.NET



GREMLIN GRAPHICS
HOLY MOLEY!
WHEN HAVING A LITTLE GREEN MONSTER IN YOUR MACHINE WAS ACTUALLY A GOOD THING

INSIDE:
ANOTHER WORLD
BEHIND THE SCENES OF DELPHINE'S ABSTRACT HIT

OLIVER FREY
FREY'S ART HAS ADORNED HUNDREDS OF MAGAZINE COVERS OVER THE YEARS – DISCOVER HOW IT ALL BEGAN

DESERT ISLAND DISKS
EUGENE JARVIS
JARVIS' GAMES HAVE APPEARED ON MORE DESERT ISLAND DISKS LISTS THAN ANY OTHER DEVELOPER – NOW HE PICKS HIS OWN…

BARGAIN HUNT
EVERY GAMES MACHINE LISTED
WANT TO START COLLECTING VINTAGE HARDWARE? CHECK OUT OUR COMPLETE LISTING

BACK TO THE EIGHTIES
WE POWER UP THE FLUX CAPACITOR AND TAKE YOU BACK TO GOOD OLD 1986

EVERY ISSUE IN RETRO GAMER

HOME-BREW
READ OVINE DESIGN'S BRAND NEW DEVELOPMENT DIARY

IN THE CHAIR…
TRIP HAWKINS ON THE RISE AND RISE AND RISE OF ELECTRONIC ARTS

RETRO REVIVAL
LOOKING BACK AT THE GAMES THAT REALLY MATTERED TO YOU

ip IMAGINE PUBLISHING
Load → 24
£4.99
24
9 771742 315011

eMag

THE RETROBATES

MOST DISAPPOINTING GAME



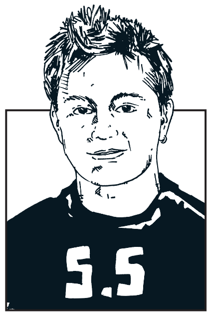
DAVID CROOKES

I can never shake the dire platformer *Count Duckula II* out of my head. Released in 1992, it looked worse than anything created ten years earlier. It was extremely slow and looked absolutely terrible.
Expertise: All things Amstrad CPC, *Dizzy*, *Broken Sword*, Atari Lynx and PlayStation
Currently playing: *Lure Of The Temptress*
Favourite game of all time: *Broken Sword*



ASHLEY DAY

This may upset a few readers but *Final Fantasy VII* is the worst game I have ever played. Its tedious random battles and messy, juvenile story immediately sent me to sleep.
Expertise: Games that nobody else seems to like
Currently playing: *The Fish Files* (Game Boy Color)
Favourite game of all time: *Shining Force III*



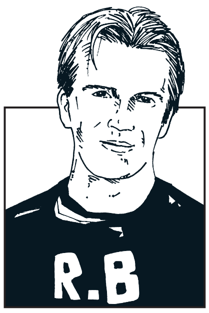
SPANNER

Renegade and *Target Renegade* were totally skill, but *Renegade 3* was so bad I willed bankruptcy upon Ocean. I succeeded, but the game still sucked, so I still didn't feel any better.
Expertise: Button mashing and foul language
Currently playing: With myself (Player 2 is on holiday)
Favourite game of all time: *ET: The Extra Terrestrial* on the Atari 2600



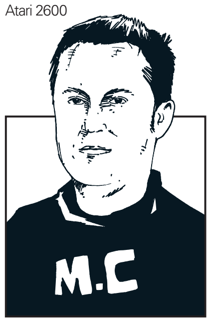
JOHN SZCZEPANIAK

Personally, I loathe *Alien 3* on the NES. It's nowhere near as good as the fantastic Game Boy version, and only takes four minutes to complete each level! To play it is to invite madness.
Expertise: All things obscure
Currently playing: *Skyblazer*
Favourite game of all time: *Doukutsu Monogatari*



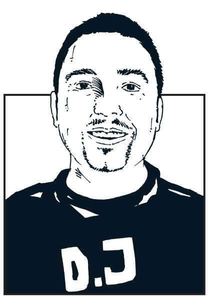
RICHARD BURTON

OutRun for the Amstrad CPC – I really wasn't expecting graphics that resembled Duplo bricks, a soundtrack of complete silence and a sensation of speed comparable to a drunken slug. Utter pants.
Expertise: Spectrum and Amstrad games
Currently playing: *Pyjamarama*
Favourite game of all time: *Manic Miner*



MARTYN CARROLL

It has to be *Renegade 3*, an awful sequel that soiled the name of an otherwise fine series. If it was a film it'd rank alongside *Beverly Hills Cop 3*, *Rambo 3*, *Jaws 3D* and *Porky's Revenge*. The pits.
Expertise: Games that played the Death March when you died
Currently playing: *Taito Legends 2*
Favourite game of all time: *Jet Set Willy*



DARRAN JONES

The CPC version of *OutRun* without a doubt. Sound effects that sounded like a dying seagull, rubbish handling and at certain points, it actually looked like you were driving backwards. Just appalling.
Expertise: Making mags quicker than you can say 'ready steady go'
Currently playing: *Oblivion*
Favourite game of all time: *Robotron: 2084*



CRAIG GRANNELL

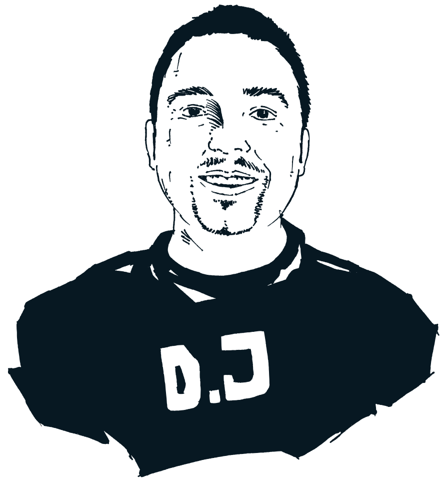
Mastertronic's *Bionic Granny* – a Darling brothers non-classic – still sends shivers down my spine and shatters any illusion that games were always better in the 'old days'.
Expertise: Games whose controllers don't require you to have 37 fingers
Currently playing: *Creatures*
Favourite game of all time: *H.E.R.O.*



ANDREW FISHER

As an experience, completing *Metal Gear Solid 2* and having to wade through hours and hours of cutscenes. In terms of gameplay, *BMX Racers* by the Darling brothers.
Expertise: 20 years of Commodore 64 gaming
Currently playing: *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker*
Favourite game of all time: *Wizball*

LOADING...



Crikey, we're already six issues into the new look *Retro Gamer* and the magazine shows no sign of slowing down. The forum is bustling away and is busier than ever, Wil Overton's gorgeous art once again adorns our front cover and the features just keep getting better and better.

To tie in with our front-page Gremlin tribute there's an in-depth article starting on page 22 that spans Gremlin's 19-year history and a whopping eight pages. Trip Hawkins, the founder of Electronic Arts, stops by on page 60 for a lengthy chat, while Eugene Jarvis finally reveals his favourite games of all time (check them out on page 78). Art lovers will be pleased to hear that there's six pages dedicated to Oliver Frey on page 66, while a review of his great new book can be found on page 84.

Oh, and if you've still not managed to subscribe yet, you'll find a fantastic new half-price offer that enables you to buy the magazine for a paltry £2.50 an issue. So there's never been a better time to get a monthly slice of retro gaming goodness.

Enjoy the magazine.







CONTENTS

BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO CLASSIC GAMES

INSIDE

At-a-glance retro sections…



CONTENTS

ESSENTIALS

GREMLIN



DEVELOPER LOOKBACK



THE MAKING OF...

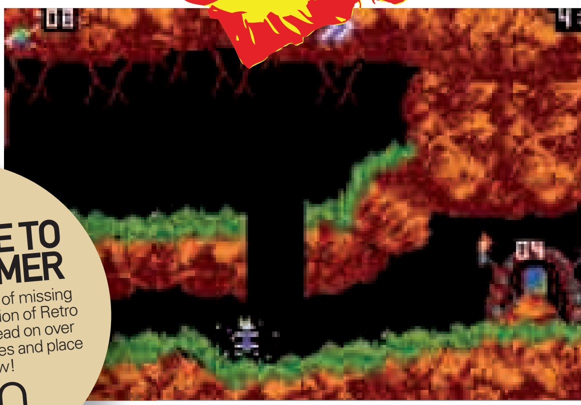
RETRORATED



THE GAMES LISTING...

If it's a bumper compilation or a great new remake, then Retro Rated is where you'll find it

retro GAMER SIZZLER



SUBSCRIBE TO RETRO GAMER

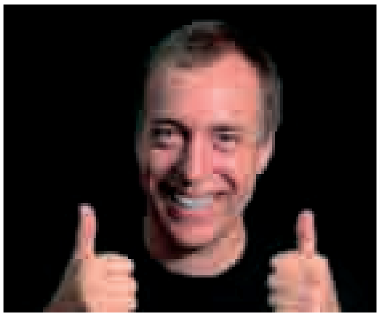
Can't stand the thought of missing the next marvellous edition of Retro Gamer? Then simply head on over to our subscriptions pages and place your order now!

p110



RETRO FEATURE

SHEER ART ATTACK



DESERT ISLAND DISKS

EUGENE JARVIS



EMULATION NATION

GP32

RETRO SCENE

GIVE US TWO MINUTES AND WE'LL GIVE YOU THE RETRO WORLD

RETRORADAR

THE GUIDE

What's hot this issue…





THE BEST CONSOLE EVER?

NINTENDO ANNOUNCES MEGA DRIVE AND PC ENGINE DOWNLOADS FOR THE REVOLUTION

What could be better than having a console that allows you access to Nintendo's impressive back catalogue? Why, a console that allows you to access Nintendo's impressive back catalogue and the cream of the crop from both the Mega Drive and PC Engine of course!

In what is easily one of the most exciting announcements ever (hey, we're extremely sad gits at Retro Gamer) Iwata's recent keynote speech at this year's GDC (Game Developers' Conference) revealed that the Revolution would now have the ability to download Mega Drive and Turbografx (as the PC Engine was known in the US) titles, alongside the already announced NES, SNES and N64 games. Dubbing the new download service the 'Virtual Console' Iwata went on to explain that the Revolution would disrupt home console gaming in the same way that Nintendo has disrupted handheld and Wi-Fi gaming. "When I imagine what faces us right now, I think of explorers setting foot on a new continent. For them it was impossible to imagine what adventure lay ahead."

While no actual titles have been announced yet, you can be sure that some of the Mega Drive's biggest hits are going to be included. We'll gnaw off our left arms if *Sonic The Hedgehog* doesn't appear in the first available downloads, and it's only a matter of time before titles such as *Space Harrier 2*, *Columns*, *Streets Of Rage* and *Altered Beast* arrive on the intriguing new console. Turbografx titles are a little harder to judge, but we're betting that the *Bonk* and *Bomberman* franchises are bound to make the cut.

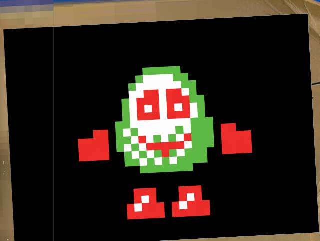
We're extremely excited about Nintendo's recent announcement, but we can't help but feel a little trepidation about how the system is actually going to work. Our biggest concern is obviously how much these actual downloads are going to cost us. Nintendo has said nothing apart from that it will be 'cheap', however, this is from a company that thought offering NES titles on the GBA at £15 a pop was good value for money. Then, of course, you have the whole multi-region aspect to consider. While a huge amount of classic Mega Drive titles appeared in the US and Europe, there were still plenty of classics confined to Japan, and Nintendo isn't exactly forgiving when it comes to allowing retailers to import titles from Japan or the US. Nintendo's new service would be an amazing way of opening up these niche titles to a wider audience, but it would be somewhat annoying if the Revolution downloads are region locked, and particularly devastating for European Revolution owners as they wouldn't even be able to download Turbografx titles.

Let's just hope Nintendo manages to work out a system that becomes beneficial to everyone, if it does then the Revolution could make a huge impact on the current retro gaming scene.



Streets of Rage 2 on the Revolution? Lordy, we can't bloody wait for Nintendo's new console now

HERO OF THE MONTH



DIZZY

Every month, Retro Gamer looks back at a classic videogame hero. This month it's the turn of the Oliver Twins' lovable Dizzy

First appearance: *Dizzy*

Distinguishing features: Red boxing gloves

Weapon of choice: Depends on given situation

Most likely to: Solve bizarre puzzles with seemingly unusable items

Least likely to: Appear in a new game

Unusual fact: Dizzy was created when the Twins wanted a new game character that made use of their new graphics programme

JUST IN JUST AS WE WERE GOING TO PRESS RUMOURS BEGAN TO CIRCULATE THAT BOMBERMAN IS HEADING TO XBOX LIVE ARCADE. MORE NEXT MONTH…

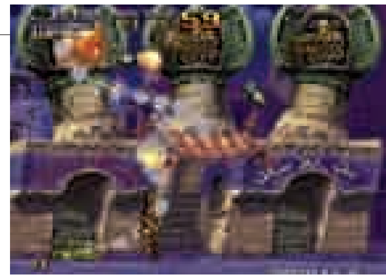
SLUGGIN' IT OUT

SNK PLAYMORE REVEALS A NEW METAL SLUG COMPILATION FOR THE PSP

The PSP is certainly receiving some decent compilations at the moment. Compendiums from Midway and Namco are already available, Konami recently released *Gradius Portable* in Japan, while Capcom has revealed that *Power Stone*, *Capcom Puzzle World* and *Capcom Classics Remixed* are all heading to Sony's sleek handheld (although *Puzzle World* is looking unlikely to receive a UK release).

The next must-have compendium looks set to be from SNK Playmore and is bound to prove a huge hit with fans of the run 'n' gun genre. *Metal Slug Collection* is due out later this year and is already looking like an essential purchase. There have been constant arguments from hardcore gamers, stating that the series went off the boil after *Metal Slug 3*, but now you'll be able to find out for yourself, as SNK Playmore will be including all six 2D games from the franchise (so that's *Metal Slug, 2, X, 3, 4* and *5*).

If you have access to the relevant emulators, you'll already know that the CD-based *Metal Slugs* look the absolute business on Sony's PSP, so we can't wait to see what improvements SNK Playmore will be making to this new official pack. While there's no news of a UK release yet, looking at the sheer amount of SNK titles that are currently being released by Ignition here, we could well be lucky.



The *Metal Slug* series is fantastic and soon you'll be able to play them in the palm of your hand. Lovely







SONY FINALLY CEASES PRODUCTION ON ITS PLAYSTATION AND ANNOUNCES EMULATION FOR THE PSP

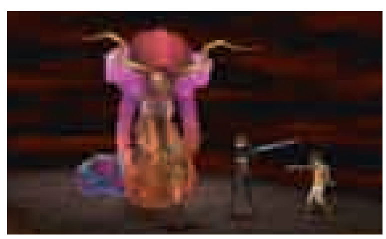
GAME OVER

The end of an era is finally here. After 11 successful years and two different models Sony is finally ceasing production of its PlayStation console.

Sony's 32-bit system was first released in Japan in 1995 and since then, has shifted over 100 million units, a staggering achievement by anyone's standards. Thanks to clever advertising, marketing campaigns and hit titles such as *Ridge Racer*, *Tekken*, *Resident Evil* and *WipEout*, Sony soon built up an army of loyal followers and quickly burned itself into the public's consciousness. Many gamers attribute (or curse) Sony for making gaming mainstream and effectively changing the face of the medium forever. While Sony is ceasing production on the PSOne, actual units will remain available until stocks run out.

The machine may no longer be manufactured, but its software will live on thanks to the PS2 (it's still not confirmed if the PS3 will support it yet) and the fact that Sony is releasing an official emulator for its PSP. No news yet as to how much these downloads will cost, or whether third-party titles will be involved, but it will considerably swell the PSP's continually growing catalogue. And let's face it, the ability to play the likes of *Gran Turismo 2*, *Metal Gear Solid* or *Final Fantasy VII* on the move can only be a good thing.



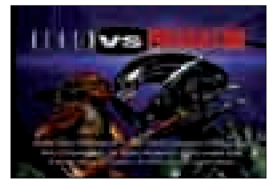


Franchises such as *Gran Turismo* and *Final Fantasy* helped define Sony's console

LOADING SCREEN OF THE MONTH

NO 6: ALIEN VS PREDATOR

1994 was a good year for gaming and bragging rights. Those brave enough to have bought the Jaguar, had something more than the rest of us to brag about. Any game that loaded with a Predator skewering an Alien in '94 was hot, but when they were not computer generated it was super nova. What made it so special wasn't the game beneath but for all who saw it an understanding that games were about to catch up with our dreams and imaginations.

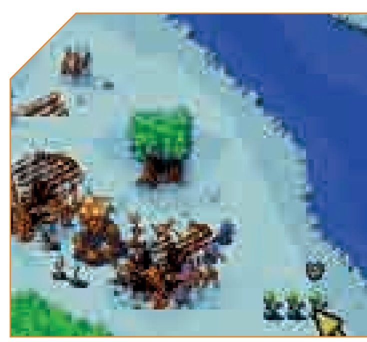


RETRO UPDATE

CAPTAIN SENSIBLE

MORE SENSIBLE SOFTWARE GAMES?

Codemasters' re-imagining of *Sensible Soccer* isn't even out yet, but it's already looking like future titles from Sensible Software's back catalogue could be resurrected. Codemasters recently hinted that if *Sensible Soccer* meets expectations there's a strong chance that it will consider making other Sensible Software titles available. This means that we could see titles like *Cannon Fodder, Sensible Golf* and the vastly underrated *MegaLoMania* get fresh updates in the not too distant future. Let's hope a DS version of *Cannon Fodder* is the first announcement.



Will titles like *Cannon Fodder* receive an update? We'll have to wait and see

USA COMMENT



AMERICA FREE RETRO★

YOUR U.S. TAKE ON THE RETRO SCENE WITH RETRO GAMING RADIO'S SHANE R MONROE



VOLUMETRIC PROCEDURALLY CODED MULTI-COLOR FOG NOT REQUIRED

This month, Retro Gamer features the Game Boy Color. It's a machine I missed out on, as I went to the Atari Lynx after my brief love affair with the original Game Boy led me to believe that the GBC was unworthy of an upgrade. While I loved my Atari Lynx (I still have two of them today), there was something unusually cool about the original, black-and-white, horrible ghosting Nintendo Game Boy.

The Game Boy was introduced in Japan in 1989 and hit our US shores in 1991. I remember the time-frame remarkably clearly considering it was 15 years ago. I was in the U.S. Navy, assigned to a submarine. If there was *anyone* that needed portable entertainment, it was the submarine sailor.

I had a small collection of games including *Kirby's Dreamland*, and of course the venerable *Super Mario Land* (one of the must-have titles for the GB). But nothing stood the test of time like *Tetris*. Not since the ColecoVision's packing in of *Donkey Kong* has a game machine and game been so beautifully married into a single box.

For months on the submarine, I played that eye-straining, low-resolution boxy handheld. I'd played *Super Mario Land* and *Kirby* all the way through a couple of times, and of course I'd logged a dumb amount of hours playing *Tetris*. The music of that game can still be heard in my dreams from time to time. The real magic of *Tetris*, though, wasn't experienced until I found out that someone else on the submarine had a Game Boy …

You'd think being trapped on a tiny submarine with 150 people for long periods of time would be proof against ignorance about your shipmates. It isn't true, no matter what Hollywood would have you believe. After a month, I met Derek – another Nintendo Game Boy fanatic. Unlike me, Derek had a Game Boy link cable – enabling us to hook up (it was only three feet, but we were used to tight quarters). It was then that I realized the importance of portable multi-player gaming. The world would never be the same.

Tetris on the Game Boy has a historical significance rarely accredited properly by the press or gamers in general. It is heralded as the best version of *Tetris* ever made by those that have a proper basis for comparison. It has also been named the best multi-player version of *Tetris* (the first portable multi-player game I remember where you actively screw over your opponent). It's been said to be one the best portable multi-player games of all time. *Tetris* on the Game Boy is a pop culture reference that has withstood the test of time – still frequenting motion-picture audio tracks. It has been immortalized in TV, film, cartoons, comics and just about everywhere else someone needs a 'portable videogame unit' displayed. I've seen one recently in the 2004 film *The Butterfly Effect*.

Our society has derailed into disposability. Here in the United States, the gaming industry is built around disposability. Games typically hold their appeal for 20 hours – and when they get old, we have great boutique stores waiting to buy them back at one-quarter retail price and sell them back at three-quarters of retail price. We're throwing away game consoles with enormous potential only to buy new ones that no one is properly utilizing yet – and we're willing to wait in line for 50 hours for the privilege.

The testament to the power of Nintendo and *Tetris* is the fact that after 15 years, *Tetris* is still alive. In fact, it has been reborn again by the big N on the Nintendo DS – and again it is being heralded as the best version of *Tetris* ever. It's selling well, and old and new alike are rediscovering 'great gaming'.



SHANE R MONROE IS THE PROUD OWNER OF POPULAR INTERNET RADIO SHOW, RETRO GAMING RADIO. HEAD ON OVER TO HTTP://WWW.RETROGAMINGRADIO.COM IF YOU WANT TO CATCH HIS LATEST SHOW.

The Game Boy has taught us a very important lesson that many overlook. Content is king. It didn't matter that the Game Boy was technically challenged or that subsequent Game Boys continued to be underpowered. Few would argue that the Sony PSP is considerably more powerful than the Nintendo DS and that the Xbox 360 will outshine the Revolution technically. The DS dominates the charts, though – and many speculate that the Revolution is coming at exactly the right time to disrupt the 'me too' Generation Gimmie gaming mantra.

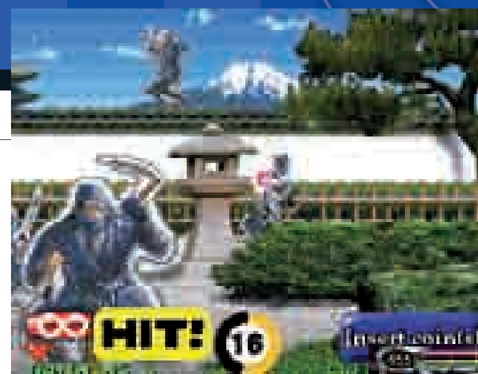
It has been said that the ability to foresee the future isn't supernatural or magic – it's being able to divine the present and the past. The Game Boy and *Tetris* were an eerie premonition about what portable gaming would become. Now we're playing on two screens. The three-foot wire is gone and we're no longer playing just one buddy sitting next to us; we're playing ten players at once from 100 feet away. But it's still T*etris*. We need a fun game.

Content is still king. Tell me … do YOU still have your Game Boy?

Keep it retro!
Shane

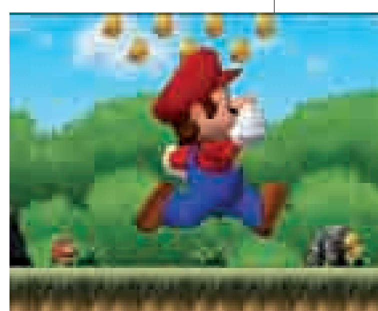
WHEN OLD IS NEW

MORE RETRO TITLES TO HIT THE NINTENDO DS



» This is obviously the original arcade game, but Point Blank DS should hopefully be very similar





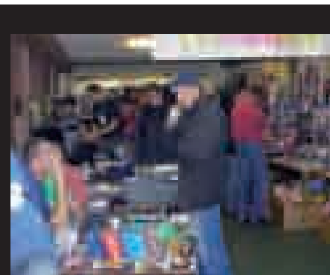
Unwilling to allow the PSP to steal all the retro glory it would appear that Nintendo's DS has plenty of retro-themed games in the offing. The most exciting prospect is that *New Super Mario Bros* is only a few months away. Nintendo has stuck to the formula (the one that equates to '2D and 2.5D are best') and ensured that its first proper *Mario* platformer since *Mario Sunshine* hits all the right buttons, blocks, coins and whatever else gets in the plumber's way. While the prospect of playing a new *Mario* title is exciting, it's been eclipsed by Nintendo's announcement that Link is also heading to its portable handheld. A short video of *The Legend Of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass* was unveiled at this year's GDC (Games Developers' Conference) and instantly had people's jaws hitting the floor. Featuring an identical style to the GameCube's *The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker, Phantom Hourglass* looks great and utilises the DS's unique abilities to the full.

Konami and Namco will also be bringing more classic series back to the DS. First up is Konami's *Castlevania: Dual Moons.* All that Konami is telling us at the moment is that the game will be set in 1999 and that Julius Belmont (and not Soma from the DS's *Dawn Of Sorrow*) will be facing off against Dracula. As with *The Phantom Hourglass*, *Dual Moons* is a title that we'll learn more about at E3.

Last, but by no means least is Namco's revelation that its hit 1994 lightgun title *Point Blank* will also be heading to Nintendo's dual-screen system. *Point Blank DS* will feature 40 different mini-games and will test your skills and reactions as you frantically tap away at the DS screen. Whilst the original game was tremendous fun (especially with a second player) we're not too sure if playing it on the DS will provide the same experience.

CLASSIC RETRO EXHIBITION EUROCON ONCE AGAIN RETURNS TO THE UK

GOT GAME?

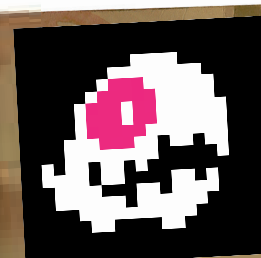


Well, it's certainly taken a fair amount of time, but Eurocon will once again be returning to the UK later this year for three whole days of retro madness. Started in 1999 the three-day event has been previously hosted in the Netherlands and Germany, but now returns to the UK after a five-year break.

Eurocon is generally regarded as one of the gaming world's greatest secrets by those lucky enough to attend it, and the fortunate gamers that do visit can expect to take part in competitions, trading, and they will, of course, get to play plenty of great classic games. This year's Eurocon will take place in Great Eccleston Village Centre in Lancashire and is due to run from the 27 to 29 of October, and Retro Gamer will of course be there to report on everything that happens. Visit http://www.sincil.co.uk/eurocon2006/index.html for more information.



VILLAIN OF THE MONTH



BARON VON BLUBBA

What would Superman be without Lex Luthor? What would He-Man be without Skeletor? Rubbish, that's what. This month: Baron von Blubba

First Appearance: Bubble Bobble

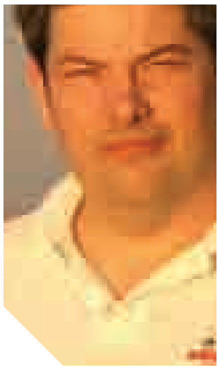
Distinguishing Features: Looks like a piece of dead skin

Weapon of Choice: His touch is fatal

Most likely to: Chase dawdling dinosaurs

Least likely to: Adopt seven children and star in his own musical

Unusual fact: If you can get to *Bubble Bobble*'s 20th stage without dying you'll be able to access a secret tomb that's full of diamonds. Yum!







» Only ten prototypes were ever made. Imagine having that sitting in your front room! (Image courtesy of Archer Maclean)

» The car image is actually a UV lit sticker. How times have changed…

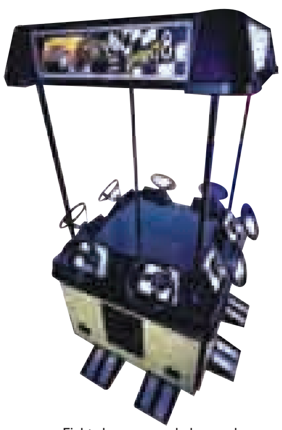


"WHAT WAS SO MEMORABLE WAS THE SHEER AMOUNT OF FUN WE HAD OUT OF SUCH A SIMPLE GAME" ARCHER MACLEAN

COMMENT

DRIVING IN BLACK AND WHITE

MUSINGS FROM THE MIND OF MACLEAN



» Eight players crowded around one machine. Cramp not included

I recently visited an arcade friend of mine for the purposes of scanning and archiving the artwork on his various rare arcade machines, as he has plenty of weird titles that I don't. In amongst the rare stuff, he had a very early B&W driving game called *Sprint 2*, from 1976 and we must have played it for an hour like a couple of big kids.

It brought back some fond memories of the day I sort of forgot to go to school, back in 1978. Me and my mate Adrian (now a Charlie big-spud at some serious investment institution) sneaked into London on the train using our school dinner money – it made a change from making explosions in the school chemistry lab. Back then the train fare was an amazing 30p or something, and all arcade games were 10p. We ended up in a small arcade in Tottenham Court Road. They had about 20 games, one of which was this big wide thing with two bloody great steering wheels and a ginormous black and white monitor. It was a real live *Sprint 2* cab earning its keep.

We spent hours and hours playing this game. It was primitive by modern standards, but hugely enjoyable, and the reason we spent so long on it was because I discovered we were getting each game for free. You see, on the first game I felt the 10p go right through the coin mechanism and somehow fall back out and into my trouser turn-up. This was because the coin return flap had been jemmyd at some point. Anyway, the arcade owner must have thought I had fleas or something, because I appeared to be scratching my leg at the end of each of the 100+ games we played.

What was so memorable was the sheer amount of fun we had out of such a simple looking game. Before you all reach for MAME, I need to state that's there's nothing quite like playing an arcade game with proper analogue inputs in the form of a steering wheel, accelerator pedal and a four-speed gear box shifter. I've just checked out *Sprint 2* in MAME, and its really horrible using a PC keyboard.

There have been hundreds of arcade driving games, but to the left I list the very earliest as produced by Atari, or its 'competitor', Kee Games. Kee was a company set up secretly by Atari to give them some artificial competition, and the market buyers some choice, because Atari realised it had a monopoly. What's impressive to me is that many of the 74/5/6 games had no microprocessor, but where instead hugely ingenious electronic designs using pure discrete logic chips. All the sound effects were pretty good, but were generated using very simple passive electronic components. Another point is that most had gear sticks; the vast majority of American cars are automatics! Perhaps this was a deliberate difficulty factor.

Very few of these games survive today because some were just so huge, especially monsters like *Sprint 8*. No operator or collector can devote the space to storing something so big and heavy and difficult to move.

Driving games have continued to evolve right up to date, and Atari were producing them from the start right up till the mid Nineties with its last one ever, *San Francisco Rush*. But how many people know about its 93/4 game '*Carmageddon*'? I don't mean the hugely successful 1995 PC game, but a twin sit-down arcade game in a 3D *Demolition Derby* style. It was also known as '*Metal Maniax*'. It failed in arcade tests in USA, so Atari crushed the 10 prototypes, and no one has ever been able to find out much more about it. Until now. In amongst the cabs piled up by my mate mentioned above, he had a real live working prototype of *Carmageddon*, so I took a picture of it, and its shown here for the first time. Unless you know better…

Games built using just logic chips

Gran Trak 10	Mar 1974	1 player, 1 wheel, 1 track, fixed time limit play.
Formula K	Apr 1974	1 player, 1 wheel, 1 track, lap timer
Twin Racer	July 1974	2 players, 2 wheels, had manual and auto gears, 1 track
Trak 10	July 1974	1 player, 1 track, compact version of Gran Trak 10
Gran Trak 20	Aug 1974	2 players side by side, 4 pedals, 2 speakers, B&W
Indy 800	Apr 1975	8 players, 16 pedals, 8 spea pec
Stock Car	Oct 1975	2 players, no track - used a playfield with variable score flags
Crash 'n Score	Oct 1975	Same as Stock car, but for USA market.
Indy 4	May 1976	4 players, similar to Sprint 4, had cup holders!
Le Mans	Aug 1976	1 player, 1 wheel, B&W, featured long oil slicks

Games using the 'new' microprocessors usually 6502 or 8080)

Night Driver	Oct 1976	1 player, BW, UV lit bonnet decal stuck on screen. 1st '3D'
Sprint 2	Nov 1976	2 players, side by side, 12 tracks, B&W
Sprint 4	Dec 1977	4 players, 2 opposite each other, 10 tracks, Colour
Sprint 8	May 1977	8 players, 2 per side, 4 tracks, colour included ashtrays!
Sprint 1	Jan 1978	1 player, single steering wheel, 12 tracks, B&W.

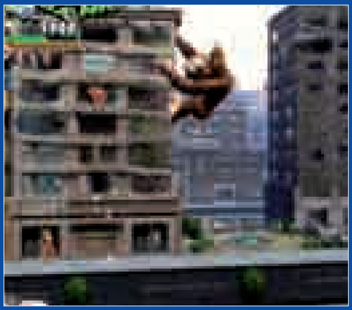
eMag

Retro Gamer DIARY

THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO…

EVENT HOSTING Retro Gamer
IF YOU WANT RETRO GAMER TO PROMOTE UPCOMING GAMES AND EVENTS, CONTACT US AT RETROGAMER@IMAGINE-PUBLISHING.CO.UK

Just because Retro Gamer looks to the past that doesn't mean that there aren't games and events to look forward to. Every month we'll be listing suitable games and events for you to add to your 'to do' list.



APRIL '06

RAMPAGE: TOTAL DESTRUCTION

Released: 28 April

Publisher: Midway

Price: £39.99

Format: PS2, Xbox

Yes, the graphics look nice and cartoonish, and we are sure that smashing up anything you can lay your giant fists on is going to be a lot of fun, but for how long? If *Rampage: Total Destruction* turns out to be an AAA title, we'll happily eat our hats, but considering the original game was so lame, we'll reserve our judgement.



JUNE '06

CAPCOM CLASSICS COLLECTION REMIXED

Released: 02 June

Publisher: Capcom

Price: £34.99

Format: PSP

It is rather annoying that it has now slipped a few months, but Capcom's latest compilation is bound to be worth the extra wait. After all, what could possibly be more fun than playing *Strider, Black Tiger, 1941, Three Wonders* and *Captain Commando* while waiting for the number 3 bus? Absolutely nothing, that's what.



JUNE '06

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA ANTHOLOGY

Released: 02 June

Publisher: Capcom

Price: £39.99

Format: PS2

We love Capcom. Not only does it release innovative games (the incoming *Okami* looks amazing) it also showers plenty of love on retro gamers. After last year's *Capcom Classics Collection*, its new *Street Fighter Alpha Anthology* is looking like another essential purchase. All four *Alpha* games are included as well as the wonderful *Pocket Fighters*.



JUNE '06

FINAL FANTASY IV ADVANCE

Released: 02 June

Publisher: Nintendo

Price: £29.99

Format: GBA

Now this is how you should remake a game. It's been released in the US for a while, but this superb adaptation of the hit SNES game is nearly with us. Featuring a terrific translation, new enemies and dungeons and plenty of tweaks, this RPG looks utterly essential and should appeal to those who played the original or just enjoy classic RPGs.



JUNE '06

ULTIMATE GHOULS 'N GHOSTS

Released: 02 June

Publisher: Capcom

Price: £34.99

Format: PSP

We've recently seen some new videos of *Ultimate Ghouls 'N Ghosts* and it blew us away. Like *Viewtiful Joe*, it's a 2.5D scrolling adventure and looks absolutely glorious. It's bound to be as tough as old boots, but we're definitely looking forward to Arthur's no doubt triumphant return. Please don't mess this up Capcom.



JUNE '06

SENSIBLE SOCCER

Released: 09 June

Publisher: Codemasters

Price: £39.99

Format: PS2, Xbox, PC, PSP, DS

Codemasters has a lot of faith in the classic *Sensible Soccer* and has already started to mention that other Sensible Software titles may get resurrected. We have still not seen any new code of *Sensible Soccer* yet, but we are now starting to get extremely excited about it (especially as *Pro* 'bloody' *Evolution Soccer* has started to take over the office).



JULY '06

NEW SUPER MARIO BROS

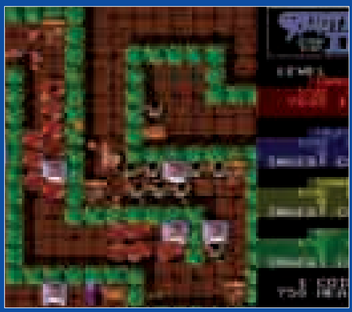
Released: 07 July

Publisher: Nintendo

Price: £34.99

Format: DS

Nintendo is keeping its cards close to its chest, but based on the few screenshots we have been privy to, *Super Mario Bros* is already looking mighty special. It is also a return to the *Mario* games of old and sees the two plumbers racing across brightly coloured 2.5D landscapes in a delightful homage to the old NES and SNES adventures. All we have to say is roll on July.



MAY '06

MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES: DELUXE EDITION

Released: 15 May

Publisher: Midway

Price: £14.99

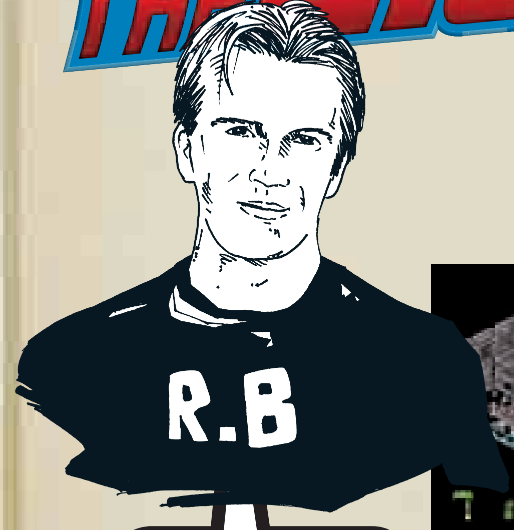
Format: PC

Only available for the PC, Midway's latest compilation is a mixture of the best (and worst) games from *Midway Arcade Treasures 2* and *3*. In total there are 28 games to choose from, with the highlights being *NARC, Xybots, Mortal Kombat 2, Gauntlet II* and *Hydro Thunder*. Nice cheap price as well.

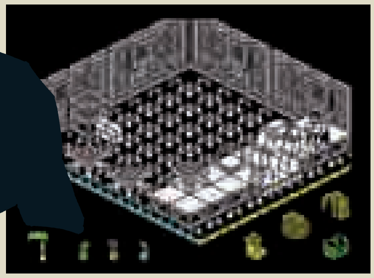
eMag

BACK TO THE EIGHTIES

THE LATEST NEWS FROM MAY 1986



May 1986 – the month when the Amiga was launched, the MSX2 was proposed and a C64 makeover was planned. US Gold were on the receiving end of a two-footed tackle from gamers and distributors alike for their "new" official FIFA football game, Artic's World Cup. Richard Burton shows the red card…



» "Holy isometric computer game Batman!" The Ritman/Drummond combo came up trumps with this superb superhero effort from Ocean

After many months of anticipation, the Commodore Amiga finally made its first official UK appearance (if you discount the previews at other venues) at the Commodore Show on 9-11 May. Although it was the undoubted star of the show, the pricing structure for the new machines caused Roger Moore-style eyebrow-raising from potential buyers.

The two different set-ups on show were priced at just under £1,700 and £1,930 inclusive of VAT. This would include the computer with 512K RAM, a colour monitor, 3½ disc-drive along with mouse and software packages. The more expensive version would have an extra 3½ disc-drive included.

However, would this spell the end of the Commodore 64? Would it be put out to pasture now it had a bigger beefed up brother turning heads? In fact, according to Commodore, the machine was going to get a face-lift and a spot of plastic surgery in readiness for a re-release.



» Ultimate's latest release received a Crash Smash but was the *Lunar Jetman* look-alike really that good? It was certainly brick-hard

With Amstrad swallowing Sinclair Research the previous month, Commodore had reached the opinion that although Amstrad had gained a significant stranglehold over the 8-bit market, another machine would give the consumers extra choice and that a good market share could be captured. The C128 machines escaped the nip/tuck treatment with Commodore opting instead for a repackaging promotion and new software bundles aimed to entice new buyers.

With Amstrad developing and Commodore adapting in the marketplace, it was nice to know that there was still a little corner left for the not-so-popular machines of the time to enjoy their own renaissance.

There was great news for MSX owners with JVC announcing that it would be producing the first machine in a new MSX2 computer range. The new and enhanced MSX would be more powerful than the original systems and had a UK release date pencilled in for the autumn.

Although an MSX revival was expected there were reservations from several of the companies involved with the MSX project previously. Rather than release its own MSX2 variants, citing various reasons, MSX2, Sony, Mitsubishi and Toshiba were all waiting in the wings to see what recognition the machine would receive and how sales would develop before committing. Maybe it was due to the less than enthusiastic response, in the UK at least, to the original MSX machines that gave them the grounds for being tentative.

After the hustle and bustle of the Sinclair takeover last month, things began to settle down at Amstrad. Having just bought out its biggest competitor and its equally enormous stockpile of unsold QL's and Spectrum 16K & 48K computers, Amstrad wasted no time in moving the machines on.

Approximately 50,000 assorted units were sold to, PST, an export house who paid £2.6 million for the privilege. That was over half the price Amstrad paid for Sinclair Research itself.

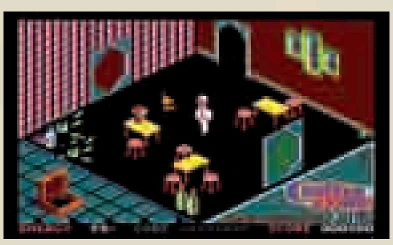


» Not only were the 3D graphics jaw-dropping back then, they were solid and textured too. The gameplay wasn't too shabby either

Amstrad also added a stipulation to the contract that the machines must not be sold in the UK marketplace. Overall, a very good deal for Amstrad as the new wave of Spectrum machines they were developing would, in theory, be preferred to the original rubbery releases and it would not adversely influence sales of its own CPC range.

Over at US Gold's house, bad vibes were abundant. A rumpus was brewing regarding its newest title, *World Cup Carnival*. The game, released to coincide with the Mexico '86 World Cup, was marketed as the official FIFA World Cup game. In truth, it was simply an "enhancement" of an older game: *World Cup* formerly released by Artic.

US Gold had originally intended to release a completely new game but when the finished product came back, it was reportedly so shockingly bad it was rejected immediately. With no time to write a new game, the decision was made to buy Artic's old game. *World Cup* was given the once-over with a damp flannel, a quick lick of paint and sent out into the shops to fend for



» *Get Dexter* or *Crafton & Xunk*? Whatever your version, it was surely one of the best CPC games… ever

1986

» Ministry Of Silly Walks or scoring a goal against Everton in the 1986 FA Cup Final?





» The "I Ran The World" T-shirt was a must have back in the summer of '86. Unfortunately, so were shell suits…

MAY NEWS

25 May saw a charitable event called Hands Across America take place, coincidentally, in America. It involved a line of more than five-million people holding hands from Battery Park in New York to Long Beach, California: a mammoth 4152 miles. The event was in aid of the homeless in the US.

Meanwhile, on the same day over in London's Hyde Park, Bob Geldof's Sport Aid: The Race Against Time was taking place, raising further funds to help the starving people of Africa. It spawned one of the best selling T-shirts ever with the famous "I Ran The World" phrase emblazoned across the chest. Over one million of the T-shirts were printed and sold, helped in part by the fact that every runner had to buy one as a form of entrance fee.

26 May saw the European Community, which later became the European Union after the Maastricht Treaty, officially adopt the flag with the 12 gold stars on a blue background for its emblem.

On 10 May, the FA Cup Final at Wembley played host to the first all Merseyside final with the top two teams in Division 1 battling it out for the famous trophy. Liverpool overcame an early Everton lead to win 3-1 and claim only the third League and Cup double that century.

Finally, the *Spitting Image* TV show somehow managed to get to number one in the music singles charts during the month with the unforgettable classic, *The Chicken Song*. Go on, stick a deckchair up your nose, I dare ya.

itself. Naturally, the game brought an angry response from both gamers and software distributors alike after finding out what the game was in a previous incarnation. Unhappy distributors were returning shed-loads of the games after equally aggrieved gamers were returning their copies back to them.

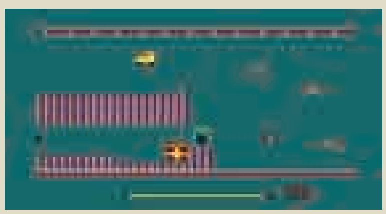
However, US Gold had certainly not held back on the packaging budget for the product. Presented in a large box format, it came chock-full of posters, badges, stickers and anything else that was glossy enough to shine in your eyes to distract you from the game itself. It certainly did not make up for one of the biggest software licensing gaffes ever.

After a positively lacklustre selection of new software releases the previous month, May '86 went some way to returning equilibrium to gamers everywhere.

Crash had several top-draw games on review to get the Sinclair owners drooling on their power packs. The Crash Smashes for this month were *Starstrike II* (Realtime Software), *Cyberun* (Ultimate), *Ping Pong* (Imagine), *The Way Of The Tiger* (Gremlin



» Bo Jangeborg's classic isometric game was graphically gorgeous to look at and very atmospheric to play



» The CPC version was a frustrating game made difficult by the inaccurate jumping control. Still, it had some banging in-game music

Graphics) and the superb isometric game, *Batman* (Ocean).

Zzap!64 kept pace with a corking selection itself with hot and throbbing Sizzlers being awarded to *Thrust* (Firebird), *Super Bowl* (Ocean) and the adventure *Ultima IV* (Origin Systems). *Alter Ego* (Activision) took home the Gold Medal after the previous month's absence of one.

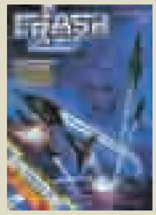
Amstradians were also contented with an excellent array of Amtix Accolades to sink their teeth into. Esteemed titles celebrating their awards were *NOMAD* (Ocean), *Fairlight* (The Edge), *Thing On A Spring* (Gremlin Graphics) and the superlative *Get Dexter!* (PSS/ERE Informatique).



» MSX2 heralded a new wave of interest for the systems although they still struggled to gain a foothold in the UK

THIS MONTH IN…

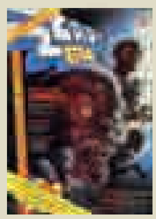
Crash Flash



The cover of issue 28 featured a fusion of *Starstrike II* and *Sam Fox Strip Poker*. With Sam's head floating in space like some Greek goddess and spaceships fizzing around it (avoiding the non-existent nipples) it made for a memorable cover.



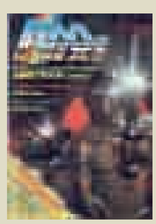
Zzap! Back



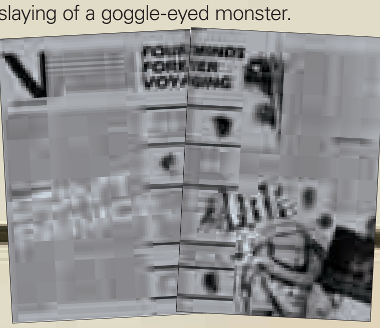
Zzap! issue 13 featured a fantastic cover guaranteed a place on the top shelf of your local newsagent back in 1986. With a gore fest of zombies, rotting flesh and a set of teeth Ken Dodd would be proud of, it was a superb yet distinctive piece of artwork.



Amtix! Antics



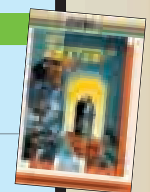
Amtix! issue 7 weighed in with a corking cover and another one with its fair share of gore. Following a heroes-and-monsters theme, the cover starred a barbarian type with generous blood spurtage following the slaying of a goggle-eyed monster.



CHARTS

MAY 1986

AMSTRAD



1 Get Dexter (PSS/ERE Informatique)
2 Spindizzy (Electric Dreams)
3 Batman (Ocean)
4 Commando (Elite)
5 They Sold A Million 2 (Hit Squad)



SPECTRUM

1 Batman (Ocean)
2 Green Beret (Imagine)
3 Heavy On The Magick (Gargoyle Games)
4 Quazatron (Hewson Consultants)
5 Bomb Jack (Elite)

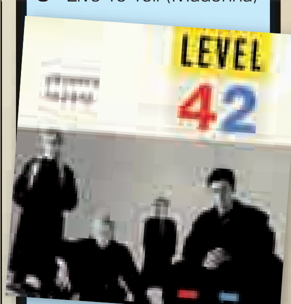


COMMODORE 64

1 Thrust (Firebird)
2 International Karate (System 3)
3 Spindizzy (Electric Dreams)
4 PSI-5 Trading Company (US Gold)
5 Spellbound (Mastertronic)

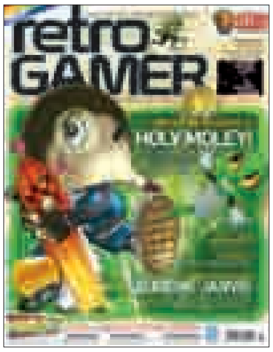
MUSIC SINGLES CHART MAY '86

1 Lessons In Love (Level 42)
2 Rock Me Amadeus (Falco)
3 On My Own (Patti Labelle/Michael McDonald)
4 The Chicken Song (Spitting Image)
5 Live To Tell (Madonna)



THE RETRO FORUM

HAVE YOUR SAY… SEND US A LETTER OR MAKE YOURSELF HEARD ON THE ONLINE FORUM – WWW.RETROGAMER.NET



CONTACT US

Snail Mail
Retro Gamer
Imagine Publishing
Richmond House
33 Richmond Hill
Bournemouth
Dorset
BH2 6EQ

Email
retrogamer@
imagine-publishing.co.uk

STAR LETTER!

PAC-ATTACK

Dear Retro Gamer,

Forget frogs and fishes falling from the sky, corn circles or even the Turin Shroud; I've uncovered perhaps the greatest mystery of all.

There I was enjoying a normal lunch at work and reading Retro Gamer when a magical thing happened, I was just about to put a salt and vinegar crisp in my mouth when I realised that I was about to eat Pac-Man himself. Realising that I would probably never witness a phenomenon like this again I decided to take a picture of my amazing find and send it in to you (the power pills were just crumbs in the bottom of the bag).

Alistair James, Warminster



That's uncanny Alistair. We've had top forensic experts from Scotland Yard examine your picture from all angles and they are convinced that the picture is not only authentic, but is quite possibly the greatest videogame character crisp they've ever seen (which is a lot apparently). Have a lovely Fossil Centipede *watch as a reward.*



You won't be stepping on that spider in a hurry…

OOH YOU DEVIL!

Dear Darran,

First, fantastic magazine, absolutely top notch! You're really managing to capture the feel of classic magazines such as Your Sinclair, Crash and Zzap!64 and it's pleasing to see. I don't know how but somehow the feel of your magazine is somewhat magical; it's warm, fun and stacked with character! Something I feel that has been sorely lacking in gaming publications for a very long time. I haven't been so enthusiastic about looking forward to every issue since Your Sinclair – high praise indeed.

Anyway, I actually have a few questions for you. I remember a long time ago that an Amiga game was being previewed called *Litil Devil*. It was a 3D arcade adventure featuring cartoon graphics and starring a rather fun looking devil, was set in hell and looked absolutely fantastic! Sadly I can't remember the name of the publisher or anything else about it. Do you remember this game? I'm sure it was cancelled before release, so any additional information you could provide me with would be greatly appreciated. Perhaps you could even write an article about it? I had been reading the excellent *Mario's Wacky Worlds* feature in your recent anthology and felt that a *Litil Devil* feature in this style would be fantastic.

Oh and one final thing.

A long time ago I sent a cheat in for *Gryzor* on the Spectrum to Your Sinclair and it was featured in the tips page, (page 27 of Issue 28 if you're interested) but I'm still waiting for the 'you've been tipped' badge I was supposed to receive. Would you happen to have some spare badges lying around the office that you could send me? You'd make me a very happy man.

Thanks very much for your time and keep up the great work.

Fraser Peterkin, via email

You'll be pleased to hear that an Amiga version of Litil Devil *is available to play, but you'll need access to a CD32 in order to experience this fantastic little game. Your only other options would be to get hold of the CD-i or DOS versions of the game. Still it's a great idea and we'll definitely try and feature the game in a later issue. Have a 'Retro Gamer Fixed It For Me' medal for such a good suggestion. Expect it to arrive in 10 to 12 years…*

MORE DISK-USSIONS

Greetings Retro Gamer,

Congratulations on the re-launch; it's fantastic and it's really good to see you back and on damn fine form.

I know that I may be in the minority here, but I just felt that I had to tell you that I'm greatly saddened by your decision to cancel the coverdisc from the front of the mag. I really looked forward to it and it's a real shame that there won't be any new ones.

Could you perhaps tell me why it was discontinued? I'd love to know.

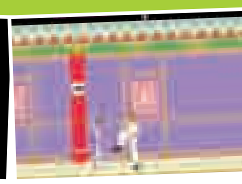
Kindest regards,

Paul de Haan, via email



EVERY MONTH ONE lucky reader will receive a cool Fossil arcade watch courtesy of those lovely people at Fossil and Atari. All you have to do is present a lucid, thought-provoking piece of literature that melts our souls; failing that, something funny with swear words in it will go down just as well…






... AND ANOTHER

Hi folks.

Just a short email to say well done on resurrecting the magazine, as I adore the new format.

To add my voice to the coverdisc debate I'd rather have no coverdisc and a cheaper magazine. To tell the truth, while I loved the old *Retro Gamer* I hardly ever got around to looking at the actual disks., which is why I stopped buying it in the end, especially as many of the main articles wouldn't interest me. Anything about the Spectrum or Atari ST and I am there, but I'm not really interested in any Nintendo or Sega stuff.

That is why I'm not subscribing to the new Retro Gamer, although I daresay I will continue to buy it on a regular basis (perhaps four issues out of five). I also think that a fiver for a magazine is far too expensive, but unlike other areas of the magazine market (film or football for example) there are not many other options so I guess you have the monopoly.

Anyway, before I disappear I'd just like to offer the following feature ideas. The demo scene on the Atari ST (the *Care Bears* and the *Lost Boys* rocked!), Interviews with Rob Hubbard and Graham Marsh (aka BOGG) who did some of the best music on the C64 and a company profile on Hewson wouldn't go amiss either (*Dragontorc* is one of my favourite games).

Keep up the good work.

Ted Webb, via email

It would appear that the 'bring back the coverdisc' debate is far from over, so once again, here's the official line. We may still release coverdiscs with Retro Gamer in the future, we just want to make sure that when they do reappear they will feature plenty of exclusive information and not the sort of stuff that can be freely downloaded off the Internet.

ARE YOU ELITE?

Dear Retro Gamer

Great work on the magazine guys; this is the first subscription I have ever taken out for any magazine so you must be doing something right!

Anyway, I own an Amiga 1200 and seem to be having problems running some of the older Amiga videogames on it. It is not the actual computer as I have many 1200-only videogames and they all work perfectly. Is the machine backwards compatible with all Amiga software, or am I just having a run of bad luck with my many recent eBay purchases?



FROM THE FORUM

EVERY MONTH, RETRO GAMER WILL BE ASKING A QUESTION ON THE FORUM AND PRINTING THE BEST (OR FUNNIEST) REPLIES. THIS MONTH WE ASKED: WHY DO YOU LOVE RETRO GAMING SO MUCH? HERE ARE JUST A FEW REPLIES

ID: Ash

Amiga games are cheaper than ever now, which is great because I'm a bit of a scrooge.

ID: Smurph

Because there are no games nowadays that would make me want to restart from the beginning immediately after dying. So many Retro games do. These days: Quick save, save points, do you wish to save what you have just saved...

ID: andy vaisey

There are a million games across a million formats that I never had a chance to play all them years ago. Now everything is so cheap, or indeed free, I can play all the classics without breaking the bank.

ID: Kai

Because the games were more about PLAYABILITY than about graphics.

ID: revgiblet

Because I'm in denial. Every time I look in the mirror at my retreating hairline and see another crease arching across my forehead it feels like a punch in the stomach from M Bison. In contrast my image is that of a 17- year-old when it's reflected on a TV screen that's playing *Syndicate*.

ID: eksosrock

It brings me back to a time when life was a lot less complicated. And the games are great.

ID: DonkeySpank

For several reasons, all of which are very simple:

I love retro gaming because...

1) Retro games tend to be very unpretentious and in an odd sort of way very unassuming. Titles these days seem to be 80 per cent hyperbole and 20 per cent substance – in the old days those stats were reversed.

2) Nothing is quite as satisfying as kicking midget-ninja arse in Bruce Lee, or luring Green Yamo to an untimely impaling.

3) Mr Do, he loves you. Nuff sed.

ID: bazza 6891

Its all about the simplicity and playability.

I am now nearly 40, have three kids and to be quite honest, about four to five hours a week of gaming time if I am lucky!

I need a game that I can load up, play for up to an hour or so, and then put it back down. I don't want to have to reread the huge manual each time I want to restart a game so I know what I am actually supposed to be doing.

It's a quick fix thing, and modern games just do not offer this.

ID: Forestville

Retro gaming is cool, as it takes me back to my childhood to the days of the Speccy 128k. I am 33 now, and playing old Speccy games on my imac g5 via "fuse" is just so nostalgic, seeing those 8-bit graphics on a flat panel display adds a 21st century twist to those Eighties 8-bit graphics, and also the 128k sound amplified on a decent set of speakers is ultra cool.

ID: markopoloman

I love retro gaming because...

I am 35 years old with a very happy childhood memory! Listening to retro game music during a game of *Monty On The Run* sends a shiver down my spine and a smile to my face.

I also enjoy the sensation of seeing my offspring having a go! Ahhh – the look of joy when I see my 11-year-old son playing *Jet Set Billy* on the Amiga – and designing his own levels on the editor.

They are two out of the million reasons why I LOVE retro gaming.

ID: The Last Ginja

Sitting down to play games that actually offer a challenge, and by that I mean not being able to save every two steps/before every end of level boss. Sure, it could be frustrating sometimes, but then you work it out and get that little bit further each go.

ID: garciansmith

Romanticism for me. The joy of discovering a gem that's been in hiding for some years (hidden from me at least). Also, *Super Mario World* – still yet to be surpassed. I have to play it once a year or everyone I know will die.

THE RETRO FORUM



Finally can anyone help me with *Elite*? I know there are supposedly six special missions, as I've played and completed the first two. However, where do the final four missions take place and when do they occur in the game. I'd love it if you could help me out.

Andrew, West Midlands

While there were a few games that refused to work on the 1200, compatibility was high, so maybe you just need to go over the instructions again and double check that you've set everything up correctly. We have plenty of classic games that work perfectly on our office machine.

As for your Elite *question. Your best bet is to head on over to Ian Bell's homepage at http://www.iancgbell.clara.net/elite/faq.htm – if he can't help you out no one can.*

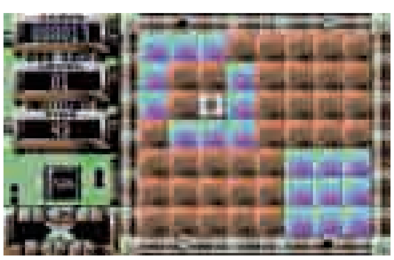
YOUR FIVER'S IN THE POST

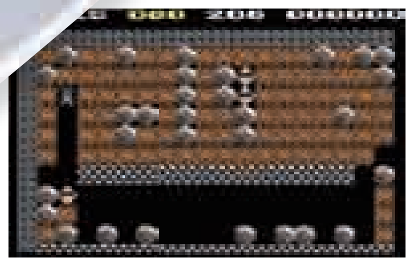
Dear Retro Gamer

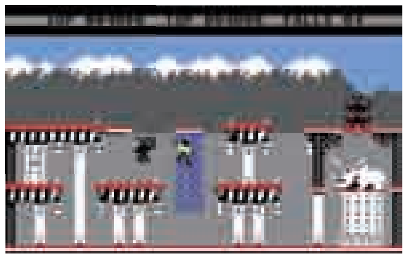
A little late this but I just wanted to say thanks so much for the kind review of *Reaxion A8* and *264* in Issue 21 of your excellent magazine. I was really chuffed with the scores they received and it's nice to know that my work is appreciated.

Jason Kelk via email

No problem Jason. In fact, we're going to start featuring a lot more remakes and home-brew reviews in up-coming issues (as requested by readers) so if you're sitting on any other classics send them in. We'd love to see them.







Bruce Lee on the Commodore 64 – happy days…

BETTER LATE, THAN NEVER

Dear Retro Gamer,

We get your magazine about three months later in Australia than the UK, and I was stoked when I saw that Retro Gamer has been revived and is on sale again. I only just picked up Issue 20 off the newsstands and have now reserved a copy every month.

I simply cannot get over what a thoroughly enjoyable read this magazine is, and I'm so glad to be collecting it again. Being 30-years-old I started off with a Commodore 64 before I finally crossed to the dark side and bought my first PC (386). Sadly, after running out of money, I couldn't afford to update my 486 and stayed away from computers until I purchased a PlayStation 2 in 2000.

I soon became bored of my new toy and thanks to early issues of your magazine, I discovered the joys of emulation, and thanks to my mum owning a PC, finally started to enjoy games again and it's all thanks to you guys.

God save Retro Gamer, because nothing will save the governor general…

Thank you for helping me to enjoy videogames again.

Azloid, Brisbane, Australia

Thanks for the kind words, but all we've really done is pick up the baton that Live Publishing unfortunately dropped. Luckily many of the writers from the original magazine are still on board so we'll pass your thanks on personally.

CONTACT US **Snail Mail:** Retro Gamer, Imagine Publishing, Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, Dorset BH2 6EQ **Email:** retrogamer@imagine-publishing.co.uk

retro GAMER

Imagine Publishing Ltd
Richmond House
33 Richmond Hill
Bournemouth
Dorset BH2 6EQ
☎ +44 (0) 1202 586200
Website: www.retrogamer.net

Thank you for supporting Imagine Publishing – a new independent specialist magazine publisher where quality, innovation and excellence are paramount. We hope you enjoy the magazine.

Retrobates

Editor in Chief
Simon Phillips
☎ 01202 586216

Editor
Darran Jones
☎ 01202 586237
retrogamer@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Snr Designer
Sarah Bellman

Sub Editor
Luke Smith

Contributors
Richard Burton, Stuart Campbell, Martyn Carroll, David Crookes, Ashley Day, Paul Drury, Andrew Fisher, Craig Grannell, Archer Maclean, Shane R Monroe, Spanner, John Szczepaniak, Mike Tooley, Kim Wild

Pictures
iStockphoto

Special thanks to…
Play-Asia, Spanner, Laura West

Advertising
Digital or printed media packs are available on request.

Advertising Manager
Felicity Mead
☎ 01202 586221
felicity.mead@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Snr Advertising Executive
Mark Maclean
☎ 01202 586220
mark.maclean@imagine-publishing.co.uk

International
Retro Gamer is available for licensing.
Please contact the International department now to discuss partnership opportunities.

International Manager
Cathy Blackman
☎ +44 (0) 1202 586200
Email: licensing@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Subscriptions
Subscribe to Retro Gamer today!
☎ +44 (0) 870 428 8359
Email: retrogamer@cisubs.co.uk
6 issue subscription (UK) – £15
13 issue subscription (Overseas) – £80

Circulation
Circulation & Export Manager
Darren Pearce
Tel: 01202 586200

Production
Production Director
Jane Hawkins
☎ 01202 586200

Founders
Managing Director Damian Butt
Finance Director Steven Boyd
Creative Director Mark Kendrick

Printed by
St Ives Andover West Portway
Andover SP10 3SF
Retro Gamer is distributed by Seymour Ltd, 1st Floor, 86 Newman Street, London W1T 3EX.
☎ 0207 3968000

ISSN 1742-3155

IMAGINE PUBLISHING

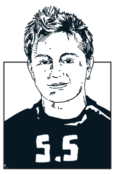
eMag

APB

LAW AND DISORDER



- » **PUBLISHER:** ATARI
- » **RELEASED:** 1987
- » **GENRE:** DRIVING
- » **FEATURED HARDWARE:** ARCADE
- » **EXPECT TO PAY:** £150+



HISTORY

The pub across the road from where I used to work was home to the largely unmentioned, yet highly addictive bird's-eye-view driving extravaganza, *APB*. If it weren't for that sticky, beer-soaked beauty flashing its marquee mounted police lights and goading me with intro screens of hippies loafing around in VW vans and going unpunished for it, my arcade education would be sorely lacking. As it is, many an afternoon was extremely well spent chasing down semi-criminals in Atari's politically incorrect cat 'n' mouse-athon – all while getting nicely lashed.

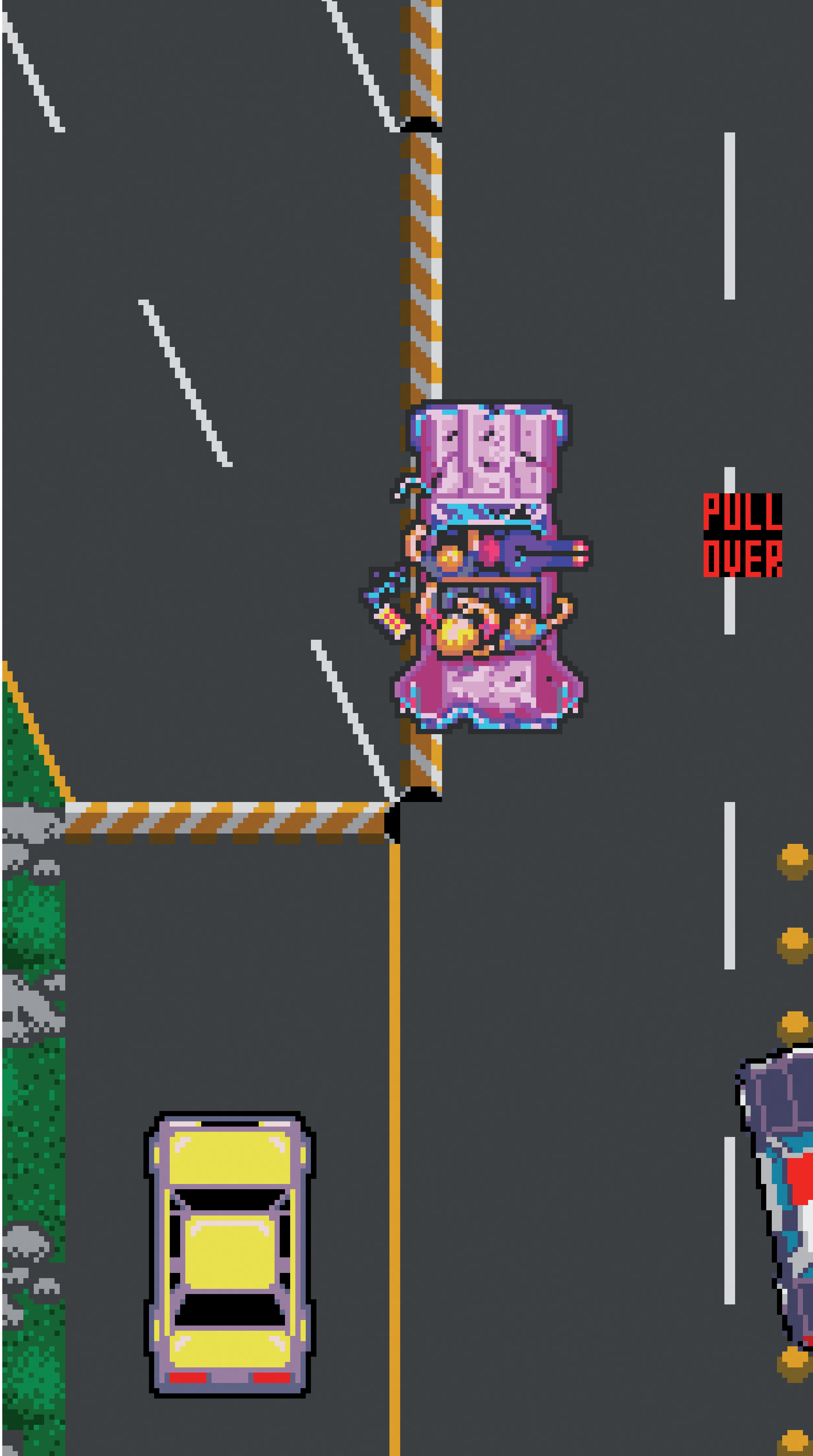
Cast as the lackadaisical Officer Bob, it's your duty to patrol the fringes of acceptable law enforcement by taking to the mean streets and harassing would be criminals into behaving responsibly.

An inspired cross section of society's mid-level dregs provide the antagonistic, semi-felonious fodder for Bob to exact his irresponsible misuse of authority upon, including litter-bugs, hippies, stoners, hikers, honkers, bikers and speeders. All these mid-to-lowlifes are brought to precarious justice by fixing them in the sights of your car and pounding them into submission by strategic abuse of the police siren. Crash without the siren blaring and it's a demerit for Bob, which ultimately leads to expulsion from the racket. Er, I mean Force.

This aspect of gameplay subtly (yet naughtily) suggested it was fine for him to do as he pleased so long as the siren and lights were ablaze – something the cynical public have suspected is true of law enforcement agencies for some time.

This quirky, divisive game surely provided a major influence for much of the controversial titles that litter the videogame charts today; another notorious driving game with an acronymous title leaps to mind…

The sharp, vaguely pastel cartoon graphics and smooth animation granted the game a 'we're just clowning around' atmosphere that beautifully camouflaged the subversive anti-message *APB* was infused with: it's okay to act irresponsibly, so long as you don't get caught.




MAX
CUP
54



Having a gremlin in the machine was bad news for pilots in World War II. Having a Gremlin Graphics game for your machine was good news for gamers in the Eighties and Nineties. Andrew Fisher looks back at the highs and lows of the company, from humble beginnings in Sheffield to becoming a major publisher and development studio.





GREMLINS

1984 was a year of growth in the UK software industry. The best software shops were small, independent traders – like Just Micro in Sheffield. After working for 12 years in Laskys (a hi-fi/electronics chain that sold computer games), Ian Stewart joined forces with Kevin Norburn to set up his own computer shop in Carver Street, Sheffield. "When Kevin and myself had opened Just Micro, we always said as soon as the shop got rolling and we found the time and the necessary programmer, that we would like to have our own software house," Ian said in an interview for Crash.

Gremlin managed to find two programmers, in the shape of Peter Harrap and Tony Crowther. Tony Crowther was at the beginning of his career, after releasing Commodore 64 games like *Loco* and *Killer Watt*. He left after just four months due to a difference of opinion, although he did return to Gremlin much later in his career. Peter Harrap came in to complain about the Currah Microspeech blowing up his Spectrum, and after several visits he began developing a game for Gremlin.

Commodore 64 fan Ant Coyne remembers the shop. "I was only 14 or 15, spending most school days in Just Micro. Not only was this great shop in the centre of Sheffield it was also owned by one of the best software houses of the time, Gremlin Graphics. Occasionally I was lucky enough to go up to Gremlin to fetch the vacuum cleaner for the shop, or to fetch sandwiches for the programmers. You could go into this shop at any time of the day and play games on any platform, check out all the new releases and not forgetting the pre-releases from Gremlin. There was a pecking order till you got your turn on the game, but the wait was always worth it!"

Another key part of the business was distribution. Ian brought in Geoff Brown of Centresoft (and the U.S. Gold label), then establishing itself as the UK's largest software distributor. Geoff became managing director with a stake in Gremlin, and the hits began to roll out.

A MOLE AND A SPRING

The news in 1984 was dominated by the miners' strike, and Peter Harrap's *Wanted: Monty Mole* has the player as a mole collecting coal and negotiating the tricky platforms underground. With a caricature of Arthur Scargill on the Spectrum loading screen, publicity was assured when it appeared on *News At Ten*. There is a myth that a miner programmed the game while he was on strike – but this is not true, although the bad guy is called Arthur in the Spectrum's end sequence. Tony Crowther did the C64 conversion, and it ended up scrolling rather than being flick-screen.

Monty went on to star in *Monty Is Innocent*, *Monty On The Run*, and *Auf Wiedersehen Monty*, which was planned as the final game in the series. His comeback was in *Impossamole*, developed by the Core Design team, where he turned into a superhero complete with cape. This was Gremlin's attempt at "doing a Mario" – getting a character to grow beyond games, into comics and merchandise.

1985 saw the arrival of *Thing On A Spring* by Jason Perkins. It was down to the oddly-named Thing to bounce around a multi-screen

IN BRIEF

Formed in Sheffield in 1984, Gremlin scored big hits on 8-bit machines, and converted the arcade classic *Gauntlet* to home computers. They released many 16-bit hits, as well as being a publisher for other developers. The *Actua Sports* series established them on consoles, but rapid expansion combined with a poor year saw them taken over by Infogrames in 1999. Eventually closing in 2003, former Gremlin staff can be found worldwide in the industry.











DEVELOPER LOOKBACK

IN THE MACHINE

factory and defeat the Evil Goblin. Thing took to regularly appearing in the margins of *ZZAP!64*, tormenting fellow cartoon character Rockford (from *Boulder Dash*).

Gremlin's relationship with the Newsfield magazines was always particularly strong – from regular features in Crash to taking the writers for a spin in a Lotus to promote the racing games. *Monty On The Run* featured a loading screen offer of a *ZZAP!64* badge and poster (which was left on the Kixx budget re-release, although the offer had closed years earlier). Newsfield's reviewers suggested games for a series of Gremlin compilations – Zzap! Sizzlers, Crash Smashes and Amtix Accolades.

ON THE REBOUND

In 1986 a gang of four joined the Gremlin team. They had met in Just Micro and the local arcade, talking about games. Chris Shrigley, Terry Lloyd, Rob Toone and Andy Green all shared similar experiences – playing early home games like *Pong*, before taking their first steps into programming and game design.

They worked out how to do a parallax scroll on the C64 after watching the arcade game *Exed Exes* by Capcom, and put it into their first title – *Bounder*. It earned them a coveted *ZZAP!64* Gold Medal. As Chris remembers, "We actually mailed the game to only one place to start: Gremlin Graphics in Sheffield. Within a week or so, we got a letter from Gremlin saying it was interested in publishing the game. We went to Sheffield one snowy December day and we were all offered in-house jobs, starting in January '86. Somehow, we'd managed to get ourselves into the games business."

Terry points out, "I've mistakenly been credited as an artist on *Bounder* but I had nothing to do with it; I later worked on the sequel though. They managed to successfully pitch the game to Gremlin as a publisher once it was nearly finished. We were then thinking of our next game and wanted to do a platformer. We all loved the new game in the arcades at the time, called *Ghosts 'N Goblins* – Chris was hooked on it. I watched him finish the game and go round again, while I took mental notes on the graphic style." This became *Future Knight* and by March '86 they had demonstrated it to Gremlin. Terry continues, "Ian Stewart was apparently impressed with the art as he called me to offer me a job (before the actual interview)."

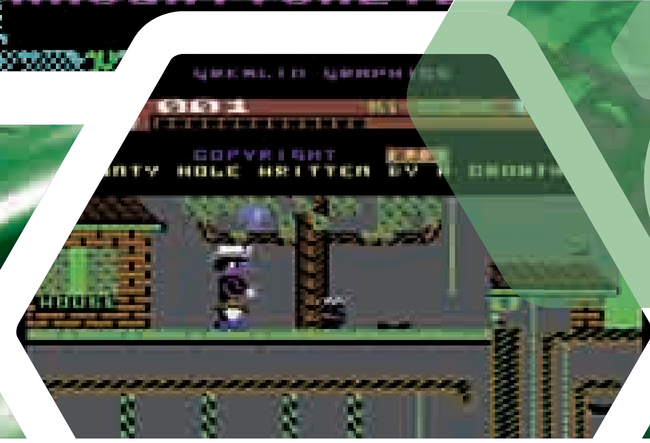
Gary Penn raved over the *Future Knight* graphics when he saw a preview version at Gremlin. Terry says, "Reading the reviews in *ZZAP!64* and seeing it on sale meant a lot to me and it was a great confidence booster." Chris agrees, saying "When I had my very first game published, and I discovered copies of it at the local Boots, I was really thrilled. Over time, the novelty has worn off somewhat, but I still get a kick out of seeing a finished game on the shelf. It almost makes the hardship of developing the game worthwhile… almost."

Terry was soon working on graphics for several different projects at once. He helped design *Jack The Nipper 2*. "The C64 version of *Jack 2* was completely different to the Spectrum… Certain games just wouldn't convert well, meaning a complete redesign of graphics



» Have peashooter, will cause trouble – Jack The Nipper







» A new, improved Thing on a Spring

NICE GUYS FINISH LAST

Back in the Eighties a long line of sports stars queued up to put their name and their image on computer games. Gary Lineker's high profile at Barcelona and Tottenham led to three games. *Superstar Soccer* was actually the follow-up to American company Sport Time's "*Superstar Ice Hockey*" and had a horizontally scrolling pitch like *International Soccer* or *Matchday*. It offered several management options, but the only drawback was the unrealistic high scores. Gremlin re-branded it with Gary's name for the European market. *Hot Shots* followed the trend for vertically scrolling pitches, and was one of the first football games to introduce red and yellow cards. Finally, *Super Skills* was a series of joystick-breaking events in the mould of *Decathlon*. None of the three games scored highly with the magazines, but Gary wouldn't be the last footballer to put his name on an ordinary game. (Gary's England team-mates Paul Gascoigne and Peter Beardsley spring to mind…)

and maps sometimes. *Monty On The Run* on the C16 was fun to work on. I did it in my spare time and had to redesign the maps and graphics, as the original C64 game would not fit into the C16's memory. I think we did it in about 2 weeks, just the programmer (Jason Perkins) and myself"

What was it like working at Gremlin? Chris says, "Gremlin had a great working environment. We were all very young and crazy and we were allowed to do very unusual things to blow off steam or relax." Moving into the Derby office, that strange behaviour included chair races down the corridor, playing baseball with vacuum cleaner attachments and "surfing" on the big company signs.

Terry recalls his *Future Knight* graphics getting an amusing reaction. "Someone commented that the leaves on the trees I'd drawn looked like 'Mushy Peas'. So for years after any time I drew leaves on trees the team would comment, Terry and his Mushy Pea Trees again. Those, and metallic 'Bas-relief' graphics became my trade mark on the 64 for years." Terry hints that their time at Core Design (which started as Gremlin's Derby office) was even wilder, but that's a story for another time…

Terry admits it was not all so rewarding. "Some games had to be done in very short development times and sometimes we could make the games we wanted. But every now and then we had to work with some naff licenses and the games turned out to be turkeys. It's unfair to pick on stuff, but we did a quick tennis game on the C16 called *Wimbledon* – that, and *Masters Of The Universe* (based on the film version starring Dolph Lundgren and published by US Gold) on the C64, were not very good."

Chris and Terry are retro gaming fans. "I love it. I get loads of emails from people wanting to chat or scrounge some old source code or ask me questions. It's encouraging," says Chris, who plays his own games via emulation on the PSP. "I like to marvel at their naivety and simplicity. Ahh, memories." Terry confesses, "I'm a big retro fan and love playing old games when I get the chance. I certainly don't mind people getting the chance to play the old games I've been involved in, even if it is for free," although he does point out the fuss over the legality of emulation, and that he regularly buys retro compilations for new machines. Gremlin was one of the first companies to make its back catalogue freely available to download.

HIT & MISS

1986 and 1987 were growth years for Gremlin, spreading to more 8-bit platforms (the Atari 8-bit and MSX, and continuing to support the Commodore 16 and Plus 4). The image of the company became more serious, with the "gremlin" replaced by a new logo. The Star Games label released several compilations, mostly of Gremlin titles.

Licensed games proved to be a mixed bag for Gremlin. The Michael Winner film *Death Wish 3* was converted to home computers and caused controversy with its violent gameplay. Being able to shoot grannies and policemen was not a good idea, while the confusing map system put gamers off. *Mickey Mouse* and the *Pink Panther* both failed to excite the reviewers. However, there was one licence Gremlin were pleased with…

THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

US Gold paid big money for the rights to convert arcade smash hit *Gauntlet* to home computers, and the job of translating it successfully fell to Gremlin Graphics (see last month's Conversion Capers).

Sadly, the rush to get the game on shelves in time for Christmas led to some infamous bugs. The worst was in two-player mode, when one player could "walk off" the screen. Then it was a case of waiting until all the walls turned to exits so the trapped player could try and escape. The letters pages were full of complaints, with US Gold explaining it as a "feature". Pre-release hype about including the famous speech ("Warrior is about to die") proved to be false as well.

Despite the bugs, high review scores and sales figures followed. Gremlin also developed *The Deeper Dungeons* add-on tape, with





Mickey uses his water pistol to eliminate the ghosts in the tower...

"SOMEONE COMMENTED THAT THE LEAVES ON THE TREES I'D DRAWN LOOKED LIKE 'MUSHY PEAS'. SO FOR YEARS AFTER WITH THE TEAM IT WAS 'TERRY AND HIS MUSHY PEA TREES'"





512 more levels to conquer, and official sequel *Gauntlet II*. Gremlin ultimately bought out Geoff Brown's stake in the company in 1989.

LOCAL BOY IN THE PHOTOGRAPH

Ben Daglish is from Sheffield, and was another customer of Just Micro. "I used to hang around Laskys where Ian Stewart and Kev Norburn worked before starting Just Micro. I'd done a load of freelance stuff for them before, and as Tony Crowther's buddy, had hung around with them all during the various incarnations. Originally, Gremlin had been set up with Ian and Tony at the helm, Tony having left Alligata, but then dodgy share dealings drove him out." Ben refuses to elaborate, stressing that he has only heard Tony's side of the story.

In 1987 Ben joined Gremlin as a full-time employee. "At first, it was great fun working there. It had some of the best programmers around (Fungus T Bogeyman, Chris Shrigley etc) and I was given my own studio (that was part of the bribe). But after a while, it became more 'corporate' – brought in 'Project Managers' and 'Marketing Teams' – and it all started getting a bit like a factory. Certainly, that's when lots of people started leaving and setting up independents (Core Design for example)."

That studio had a Tascam 8-Track, a Korg Poly 800, an FX80 and other modules – which Ben used for the *Federation Of Free Traders* soundtrack and sampling sounds for the Amiga. "That was where Rob & I spent 3 days getting pissed and coming up with the *Auf Wiedersehen Monty* soundtrack."

What was Ben's favourite project at Gremlin? "*FOFT* – I got to get my mate Steve 'biddley biddley' Higgins in to record a stormer of a guitar solo for the cassette soundtrack that accompanied the game, and it was a lovely concept – flawed, but lovely. Least favourite was probably the endless conversions of the sports stuff, which basically consisted (for me) of copying somebody else's music." And his reasons for leaving the company, and the software industry? "Men in suits. Blokes walking around the office talking about "shipping boxes" with no idea what was in them! At least Ian Stewart actually played games, and enjoyed the industry. As soon as the marketing graduates got involved, it was all over as far as I was concerned. I think, looking at the lack or originality and innovation in the games world today, my fears were borne out."

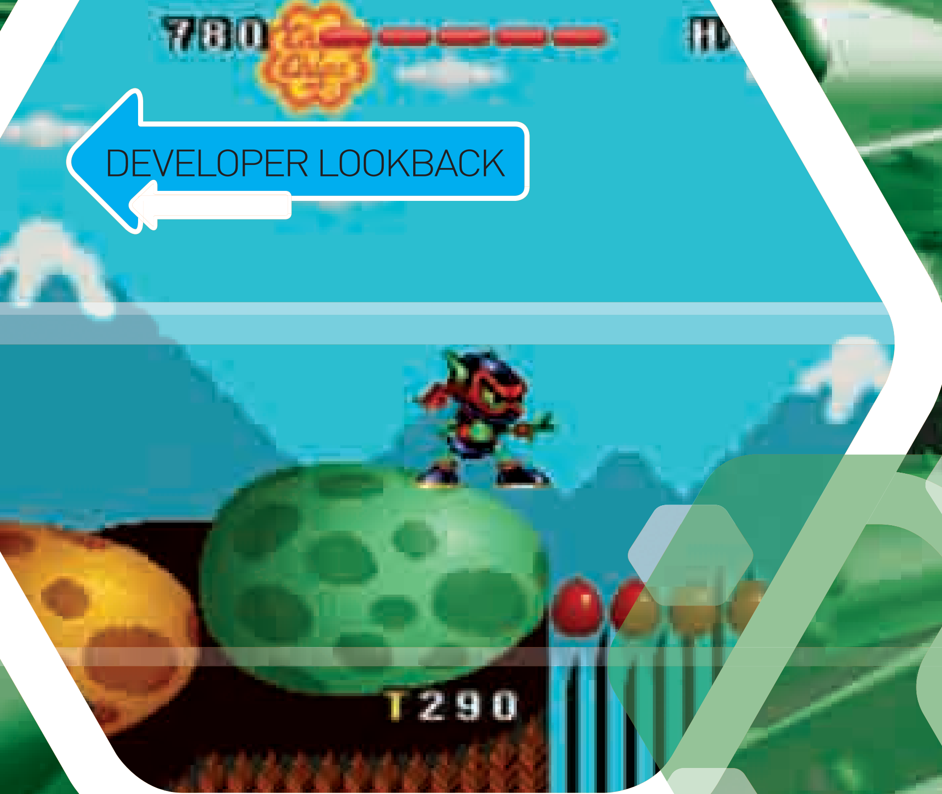
BIGGER BITS

Gremlin in the Nineties was all about racing cars and platform games. Developer Magnetic Fields (see Retro Gamer issue 19) were in the right place at the right time. Andrew Morris says, "we had a 70 per cent complete game when we took it to Gremlin; they loved it and signed us up straight away as they had just acquired the *Lotus* licence. The two fitted together perfectly."

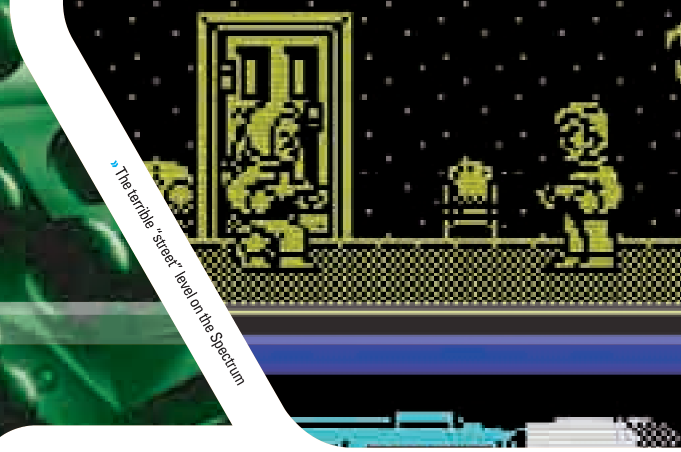
Programmer Shaun Southern adds, "we had a great relationship with Gremlin. We'd usually stay up there in Sheffield for the week before mastering, so we got a fair bit of hospitality as well. I think someone actually sent in a C64 version of *Lotus* they were working on, and Gremlin took them on to do the proper version." That was Ashley Bennett, who became a member of Gremlin's in-house team. "I'm told the entire *Lotus* series sold a million units; they certainly pulled no punches in getting the game 'out there' "

Andrew says, "At the time, we were very pleased with their promotion. There were launches and events at the Lotus factory and Millbrook Proving Ground with cars available to drive. At Lotus, one of their test drivers took us around their test track (sideways!) and at Millbrook we were driven around the high-speed 'bowl' at 160mph. There were also computer shows, a lot of advertising and promotion with posters and merchandising," Taking the journalists for a spin in a real Lotus whetted their appetite and the games got high scores.

Enter the *Ninja Of The Nth Dimension* – *Zool*, a fast-paced platform game designed to rival *Sonic*. A tie-in with sweet manufacturers Chupa Chups gave the game some lovely candy-



» Sweet platform action in Zool on the Game Boy - watch out for the giant bees!



» The terrible "street" level on the Spectrum





» The terrible 3D driving section of Technocop (C64)

"SPORTS STARS LIKE FORMER GOALKEEPER CHRIS WOODS DONNED THE BLACK SUIT WITH THE WHITE PING PONG BALLS AND WERE TURNED INTO DIGITAL PLAYER MODELS"

coloured backdrops. Converted to other formats including the Game Gear and the CD32, *Zool* returned for a second game that appeared on the ill-fated Atari Jaguar.

Gremlin tried its hand at many different formats through the mid-Nineties, building its own development hardware. The PC Engine system was described as "a huge of box of RAM" in an ACE magazine interview, but there was only one title made with it – *Impossamole*. Barry Leitch, the musician, remembers, "The PC Engine version of *Impossamole* got excellent reviews, which was surprising considering that all the music and the music driver was written from scratch in 4 days…" The Game Boy development system allowed programmers to switch instantly between coding and testing the game. It was used for titles like *Race Days*, and the puzzle game *Brainbender* (based on *Deflektor*).

Gremlin continued to create 8-bit games until 1994. It was responsible for the Amstrad and Spectrum conversions of *Shadow Of The Beast*, while Ocean did the C64 game. The budget label GBH (Gremlin's Biggest Hits) put out the older games for a cheaper price on 8 and 16-bits, but the market was changing.

SPORT ACTUALLY

Sega took the word "Virtual" and dropped the L, applying it to its 3D games. Gremlin took the word "Actual" and dropped the L for its 3D sports games. *Actua Soccer* (also known as *VR Soccer*) became the first fully 3D football game (earlier "3D" titles like *Super Soccer* had relied on a constant third-person viewpoint). More 3D sporting action came in the form of the *Actua Golf* series (later to gain the official PGA license), and the rough and tumble of *Actua Ice Hockey*.

The heart of the Actua Sports series was Gremlin's motion capture technology, as it was the first UK software firm to build a dedicated mo-cap studio. Sports stars like former England goalkeeper Chris Woods (then playing for Sheffield Wednesday) donned the black suit with the white ping-pong balls and were turned into digital player models. *Actua Soccer 2* even appeared on MTV in a music video for the Super Furry Animals…

Worldwide expansion and a strategic partnership with graphics card manufacturer nVidia followed in 1998. Gremlin set up development studios in Los Angeles and Melbourne, and signed a co-publishing agreement with US firm Interplay. Gremlin also built a new recording studio, where commentators would provide speech for the sports games and musicians would create their soundtracks.

BIG FISH, LITTLE FISH

Seeking a larger slice of the market, Gremlin changed names and logo to Gremlin Interactive in 1994 and then in 1996 made the decision to buy well-known developer DMA Designs. While many in the industry saw it as a good deal, the reality was different. DMA produced very few games under the terms of the deal (*Body Harvest* for the N64 being the best among them) and the lucrative *Grand Theft Auto* licence had already gone to BMG (Bertelsmann Media Group).

1998 was a bad year in terms of sales, and in 1999 Gremlin was ripe for a take-over. Infogrames came in with a £24 million bid, renaming the company to Infogrames Studios Limited. The team stayed together in Sheffield and concentrated on the PlayStation and PC. Ian Stewart left Gremlin after the merger in 1999 to set up new venture Zoo Digital.

The doors closed in 2003 after a re-organisation of Infogrames, with many staff moving to new developer Sumo Digital (most famous for *OutRun 2* on the Xbox). Gremlin leaves behind many great games (and a fair few duds) on many different formats.

GREMLIN 1984 – 2003 RIP

With thanks to World of Spectrum (www.worldofspectrum.org) and Chris Shrigley for photos, screenshots and adverts.



SOFTOGRAPHY

1984-5
Bounder (C64)
Dork's Dilemma (C16/Plus)
Grumpy Gumphrey Supersleuth (Amstrad, Spectrum)
Monty Is Innocent (Spectrum)
Petals of Doom (C16/Plus 4)
Rescue from Zylon (C16/Plus 4)
Sam Stoat Safebreaker (Spectrum)
Thing On A Spring (C64)
Tycoon Tex (C16/Plus 4)
Wanted: Monty Mole (C64, Spectrum)
West Bank (based on the arcade game Bank Panic – Amstrad, C64, Spectrum – UK publisher for Dinamic)
Xargon Wars (C16/Plus 4)
Zone X (Atari 8-bit)

1986
4 Crash Smashes volumes 1 & 2 (Spectrum)
4 ZZAP! Sizzlers volumes 1 & 2 (C64)
Avenger (Amstrad, C64, MSX, Spectrum)
Bounder (Amstrad, C16/Plus 4, MSX, Spectrum)
Bounder On The rebound (improved C64 version)
Death Wish 3 (Amstrad, C64, MSX, Spectrum)
Footballer Of The Year (Amstrad, Atari 8-bit, BBC/Electron, C64, C16/Plus 4, MSX, Spectrum)
Future Knight (Amstrad, C64, C16/Plus 4, MSX, Spectrum)
Gauntlet (for US Gold – Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
Jack the Nipper (Amstrad, C64, MSX, Spectrum)
Monty On The Run (Amstrad, C64, C16/Plus 4, Spectrum)
Trailblazer (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari 8-bit, Atari ST, C16/Plus 4, C64, Spectrum)
Way Of The Tiger (Amstrad, C64, C16/Plus 4, MSX, Spectrum)
Xcellor8 (C16/Plus 4)

1987
Alternative World Games (Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, Spectrum)
Auf Wiedersehen Monty (Amstrad, C64, C16 & Plus 4, MSX, Spectrum)
Basil The Great Mouse Detective (Amstrad, Atari 8-bit, C64, Spectrum)
Blood Valley (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, Spectrum)
Cosmic Causeway (aka Trailblazer 2 – Amiga, Atari ST, C64)
Gary Lineker's Super Star Soccer (Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, Spectrum)
Gauntlet: the Deeper Dungeons (add-on tape for US Gold – Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
Gauntlet II (C64, Spectrum)
Jack the Nipper II In Coconut Capers (Amstrad, C64, MSX, Spectrum)
Krakout (Amstrad, BBC, C64, MSX, Spectrum)
MASK (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
MASK 2 (Amstrad, C64, MSX, Spectrum)
Masters Of The Universe: The Movie (for US Gold – C64, MSX, Spectrum)
Moley Christmas (Spectrum – Your Sinclair issue 25 covertape)
Pool & Snooker (C64)
Re-bounder (C64, Spectrum version never released)
Samurai Trilogy (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
Star Games 1 & 2 Compilations (Amstrad, Spectrum)
Take 4 compilation (Spectrum)
Thing Bounces Back (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
Typhoon (Amiga, Atari ST)
Xmas Ludo (Spectrum)

1988
10 Great Games 1, 2 & 3 Compilations (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum – games varied by format)
Artura (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, DOS, Spectrum)
Blood Brothers (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
Dark Fusion (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
Deflektor (C64, Amiga, Atari ST, Spectrum)
Footballer Of The Year 2 (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, Spectrum)
Gary Lineker's Hot Shots! (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, DOS, Spectrum)
Gary Lineker's Super Skills (Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, Spectrum)
Magician's Curse 3 (C16/Plus 4)
MASK 3: Venom Strikes Back (Amstrad, C64, MSX, Spectrum)
Mickey Mouse: The Computer Game (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, Spectrum)
Motor Massacre (aka Road Raider – Amstrad, Amiga, Atari ST, C64, Spectrum)
Night Raider (aka Dive Bomber – Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, DOS, Spectrum – Amiga version unreleased?)
Pink Panther (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, Spectrum)
Roy Of The Rovers (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
Super Sports (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
Technocop (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, DOS, Spectrum)
Tour de Force (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
Tube Runner (C16/Plus 4)

1989
10 Mega Games Volume 1 (Amstrad, Spectrum)
Action ST Compilation (Atari ST)
Axel's Magic Hammer (Amiga, Atari ST)
Butcher Hill (Amiga, Atari ST)
Combo Racer (Amiga, Atari ST)
Cybernoid (NES)
Dark Fusion (Amiga, Atari ST)
Flight Ace Compilation (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
H.A.T.E. – Hostile All-Terrain Encounter (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, Spectrum)
Hole In One (aka Mini-Golf – Amiga, C64 – publisher for Magic Bytes)
Karate Ace compilation (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
Mindbender aka Deflektor 2 (Amiga, Atari ST, C64, DOS)
Space Ace compilation (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
Super Scramble Simulator (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, Spectrum)
Switchblade (Amiga, Atari ST)
The House Mix compilation (Spectrum version missing)
The Soccer Squad compilation (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)

1990
Combo Racer (Amiga, Atari ST)
Gary Lineker's Hot Shot! (Amiga, Atari ST)
Gauntlet II (Gameboy, NES)
Federation Quest 1: B.S.S. Jane Seymour (aka Spacewrecked – Amiga, Atari ST, DOS)
Impossamole (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, Spectrum)
Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, DOS, Spectrum)
Roy Of The Rovers (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, Spectrum)
Shadow of the Beast (Amstrad, Spectrum)
Skidz (Amiga, Atari ST)
Super Cars (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, NES, Spectrum)
Switchblade (Amstrad, Amstrad Plus cartridge)
Technocop (Megadrive)
Toyota Celica GT Rally (Amiga, Atari ST, DOS)
Venus The Fly-trap (Amiga, Atari ST)

1991
10 Pack compilation (Spectrum)
Hero Quest (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, DOS, Spectrum, Windows)
Hero Quest: Return Of The Witch-Lord Expansion Pack (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, Spectrum)
Leander (Amiga – publisher for Interplay)
Lotus Turbo Challenge 2 (Amiga, Atari ST, Megadrive as "Lotus Turbo Challenge")
Ramrod (Amiga version unreleased – development stopped in 1991)
Super Cars II (Amiga, Atari ST)
Suspicious Cargo (Amiga, Atari ST)
Switchblade (C64, Spectrum)
Switchblade II (Amiga, Atari ST)
Team Suzuki (Amiga, Atari ST)
Toyota Celica GT Rally (Amstrad, Spectrum)
Utopia: The Creation of a Nation (Amiga, Atari ST, DOS)

1992
4 Wheel Drive Compilation (Amiga, Atari ST)
Chart Attack Compilation (Amiga, Spectrum)
Greg Norman's Power Golf (NES)
Jeep Jamboree (Gameboy, published by Virgin)
Harlequin (Amiga, Atari ST)
Lotus 3: The Ultimate Challenge (Amiga, Atari ST, Megadrive as "Lotus 2")
Margot's Magic Colouring (Spectrum)
Plan 9 from Outer Space (Amiga, Atari ST, DOS)
Premier Manager (Amiga, Atari ST, DOS)
Space Crusade (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, DOS, Spectrum)
Space Crusade: The Voyage Beyond (Amiga, ST)
Switchblade 2 (Lynx)
The Shoe People (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
Top Gear (aka Top Racer – SNES)
Utopia: The New Worlds (add-on disk, Amiga)
Videokid (Amiga, Atari ST)
Zool (Amiga, Atari ST)

1993
16-Bit Hit Machine compilation (Amiga, Atari ST)
Nigel Mansell's World Championship (Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, CD32, DOS, Megadrive, SNES, Spectrum – C64 version never released)
Premier Manager 2 (Amiga, Atari ST, DOS)
Utopia: The Creation Of A Nation (SNES)
Zool (CD32, DOS, Gameboy, Master System, Megadrive, SNES)
Zool 2(Amiga, Atari ST)

1994
Desert Strike: Return To The Gulf (DOS)
Disposable Hero (aka Impulse - Amiga, CD32)
Full Throttle Racing (SNES, published by GameTek)
Heroquest II: Legacy of Sorasil (Amiga, CD32)
K240 (Amiga, CD32)
Littl Divil (CD32, CD-I, DOS – Jaguar version unreleased)
Lotus Trilogy compilation (CD32)
Newman Haas Indy Car (Megadrive, SNES)
Premier Manager 3 (Amiga 1200, DOS)
Retribution (DOS)
Striker (Atari ST, CD32)
Top Gear 2 (Amiga, Amiga 1200, CD32, Megadrive, SNES)
Top Gear 3000 (SNES)
Zool (Acorn Archimedes, Game Gear)
Zool 2 (CD32, DOS, Jaguar)

1995
Actua Soccer (DOS, PS1, Windows)
Fatal Racing (aka Whiplash - DOS)
Jungle Strike (DOS)
Loaded (PS1)
Premier Manager (Megadrive)
Premier Manager 3 Deluxe (Amiga, DOS)
Shadow Fighter (Amiga, CD32)
Slipstream 5000 (DOS)

1996
Cyber Rage (PC)
Hardcore 4x4 (PS1)
Loaded (Saturn)
Lost Vikings 2 (PS1 – publisher for Interplay)
Normality (DOS)
Re-Loaded (DOS, PS1)
Sand Warriors (DOS)
Super Cars International (DOS)

1997
Actua Soccer Club Edition (DOS, Saturn, PS1, Windows)
Actua Soccer 2 (PS1, Windows)
Fragile Allegiance (DOS, Windows)
Judge Dredd (PS1, plus an arcade version in partnership with Acclaim)
Monopoly (PS1 – for Hasbro Interactive)
Realms of the Haunting (DOS)

1998
Actua Golf 2 (Windows)
Actua Ice Hockey (PS1, Windows)
Actua Soccer 3 (PS1, Windows)
Body Harvest (N64 – publisher for DMA Designs)
Buggy (PS1)
Hardwar (Windows – publisher)
Men in Black (PS1)
Motorhead (PS1, Windows)
N20 (PS1)
Outlaw Racers (Windows)
Pool Shark (aka Ultimate 8 Ball - PS1)
RC Racer (PS1, published by Fox)

1999
Actua Ice Hockey 2 (PS1, Windows)
Actua Golf 3 (PS1)
Actua Soccer 3 (Windows)
European PGA Golf (aka Actua Golf 4 - PS1, N64)
Fox Sports Golf '99 (PS1)
Premier Manager 64 (N64)
Premier Manager 99 (PS1, Windows)
Tanktics (Windows – publisher for DMA Designs)
Wild Metal Country (Windows – publisher for DMA Designs)

2000
Actua Tennis (PS1)
Gekido (PS1 – published by Interplay)
Hogs of War (PS1, Windows)
Premier Manager 2000 (PS1, PC)
Rally Masters (PS1)
Soulbringer (Windows)
The Best of Gremlin (CD compilation for Amiga & Windows 95)

2001
UEFA Challenge (PS1, PS2, Windows)
Wacky Races (Dreamcast, PS2)
Whiplash 2 (Dreamcast, PC)

2002
Micro Machines (Gamecube, PS2, Xbox)
Slam Tennis (PS2, Xbox)
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips (Gamecube, PS2)

2003
Premier Manager 2003-4 (Gameboy Advance, PS2, Windows)

2004
Premier Manager 2004-5 (Gameboy Advance, PS2, Windows)

Timeline

Let's look back in time at some of Gremlin's greatest moments, from 8-bits to 3D graphics cards…

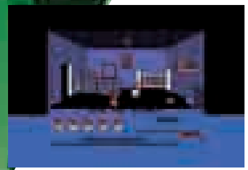


AVENGER **(Amstrad, C64, MSX, Spectrum)**
Gauntlet inspired many other games, including this scrolling maze game. It was actually the second game in the *Way Of The Tiger* series, licensed from a popular series of adventure books. Our hero is a ninja, fighting his way through a castle to destroy the bad guy. You need to collect a series of objects and avoid running out of keys or energy – no easy task with the huge number of enemies thrown at you. Luckily you have lots of shuriken to fling, and when they run out you can use your fists and feet.

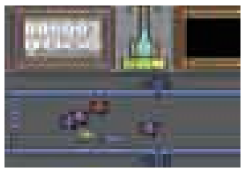
BOUNDER **(Amstrad, C16/Plus 4, C64, MSX, Spectrum)**
It started life on the C64 and bounced across to other formats the following year. A bouncing tennis ball makes its way up and across a series of platforms filled with sharp things trying to burst it or blow it off course. Arrows boost your jump, giving you longer in the air to find somewhere to land, and teleporters zoom you further up the level. Get to the end and the bonus game appears – a single screen where you have limited jumps to land on all the question marks for points.



FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR **(Amstrad, Atari 8-bit, BBC/Electron, C64, C16/Plus 4, MSX, Spectrum)**
As a variation on the football management game, *Footballer Of The Year* gives you the chance to deal with the ups and downs of life in football. You have goal cards that give you a number of chances in each match (portrayed in a simple arcade sequence), and incidents that can give or take away money. Your eventual goal is to be voted footballer of the year.



JACK THE NIPPER **(Amstrad, C64, MSX, Spectrum)**
Naughty, naughty, very naughty… From dropping china plates to scaring the cat with a horn and leaving it hanging from the ceiling, Jack gets up to some bad things. Of course the grown-ups are not going to stand by and let you cause trouble, so they will spank you if you get too close, bringing on the dreaded nappy rash. Cute graphics and the puzzle elements drag you back to being a toddler time and again.



THING ON A SPRING **(C64)**
You control Thing, whose body is a spring… Leaping around the Evil Goblin's factory, you must find nine puzzle pieces that will give you a clue how to beat the Goblin. Throughout the factory are ghouls and gremlins that drain your oil supply; run out of oil and it is game over. Slippery slopes, conveyor belts and crumbling platforms also stand in your way. The music by Rob Hubbard has long been a favourite of C64 fans.

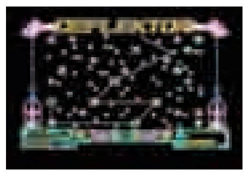


WEST BANK **aka Bank Panic (Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)**
Spanish software house Dinamic published several games through Gremlin, and this one was based on the arcade game *Bank Panic* (for which Dinamic did not have a licence). As the bank's security guard you have to watch the doors open, letting the paying customers in safely and shooting the bad guys. Fred Gray's western music adds atmosphere, particularly to the tense shoot-out between levels.

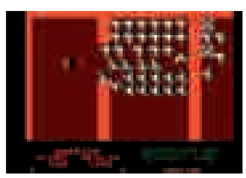
1 9 8 4 - 6



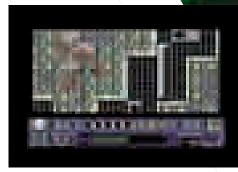
AUF WIEDERSEHEN MONTY **(Amstrad, C64, C16 & Plus 4, MSX, Spectrum)**
This was planned to be the last of the *Monty Mole* games, with Monty escaping across Europe trying to earn enough to buy his own Greek island. You have to collect money as well as valuable objects including the Mona Lisa, and the airline tickets that let you fly between European countries (in a sub-game where you have to nibble away at the back of the other aeroplanes). The C64's music was a collaboration between Ben Daglish and Rob Hubbard. Many reviewers felt it was too similar to *Monty On The Run*, but Gremlin revived Monty for the follow-up, *Impossamole*.



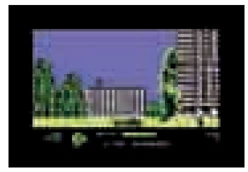
DEFLEKTOR **(C64, Amiga, Atari ST, Spectrum)**
Manipulating mirrors to guide a beam of light around a maze, the pressure is on as you try to avoid overheating the generator or running out of energy. Each level has a number of mines to destroy before the target receiver will open. Deflektor was converted to the Gameboy as *BrainBender*, and the sequel *MindBender* was also published by Gremlin.



GAUNTLET **(for US Gold – Amstrad, Atari 8-bit, C64, Spectrum)**
This was guaranteed to be a smash hit thanks to the arcade machine – and Gremlin did a good job of the conversion. The speech and the on-screen hints are missing from the 8-bit versions, but the scrolling is smooth even with the large number of enemies onscreen.

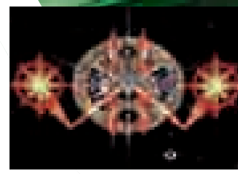


RE-BOUNDER **(C64, Spectrum version never released)**
The sequel to *Bounder* had levels that scrolled horizontally as well as vertically, there were end-of-level bosses to beat and you had to work out which way to turn at the "junctions" between levels. To help you along the ball now came equipped with a choice of weapons and protective armour. Running into obstacles reduced the ball's pressure, and it could be recharged at pumping stations with a quick waggle of the joystick. You also had to collect enough smart bombs to beat the adversary at the end of the game – that is, if you hadn't taken a wrong turning…



THE MUNCHER **(C64, Spectrum 128)**
Australians Beam Software were inspired by arcade game *Rampage* to produce, *T-Wrecks*, a game featuring a giant dinosaur destroying cities and army bases to rescue its young ones. A clever bit of marketing saw it renamed *The Muncher*, as a tie-in with the Chewits adverts that featured a large monster.

1 9 8 7 - 8



FEDERATION OF FREE TRADERS **(Amiga, ST)**
Touted by many as being better than *Elite*, this is a similar space trading and fighting game. Controversy surrounded an issue of Newsfield magazine The Games Machine, which had the game's logo covered with a big red NO! This was referring to the ST version, which the reviewers felt was good but flawed. When the Amiga version appeared a few months later, it got a high score from ZZAP!…

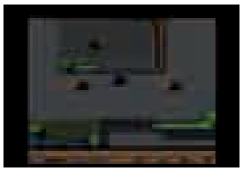


GREG NORMAN'S ULTIMATE GOLF **(Amiga, Atari ST, C64, DOS – Spectrum version never released, NES version called GREG NORMAN'S POWER GOLF)**
Gremlin had been developing its *Ultimate Golf* game for more than a year before the Great White Shark himself put his name to it. It was the company's attempt at a 3D golf game, and the only drawback was the slow update of the screen – even on 16-bit machines. A wealth of options like changing the golfer's stance made it a challenger for titles like *Links*. Gremlin would return to the golf course with *Actua Golf* and the follow-on *PGA* titles.



JOHN LOWE'S ULTIMATE DARTS **(Amiga, C64)**
Another licensed sports star for Gremlin. One of the most intriguing options is the "real board" mode – the idea is, the player plays on a real board and inputs his scores, then the computer simulates John's throws. Compared to other darts games (most notably *Bully's Sporting Darts* from Zeppelin), it is not as much fun but John does prove a worthy opponent in digital form.

1 9 8 9 - 9 0

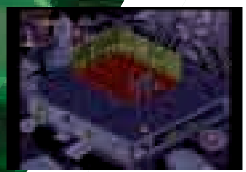


SUPER CARS
(Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, NES, Spectrum)
Winning races in *Super Cars* is about more than just racing – you can play dirty and fire a missile to wreck an opponent's chances! Magnetic Fields took the overhead view of games like *Super Sprint*, made the courses a lot larger and added weapons. Spend the cash earned from winning races to gain upgrades or even a completely new car in the shop. The sequel has more weapons and more courses – you may need its humorous Highway Code interludes to help you drive safely…



VENUS THE FLY-TRAP
(Amiga, Atari ST)
An unusual hero for a computer game, the robotic fly in Venus is very agile. The main action is platform-based, with a twist – every so often you are flipped upside-down to walk on the ceiling. Collecting power-ups and bonus items is vital to survival. At the end of each world there is a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up bonus game.

1 9 8 9 - 9 0



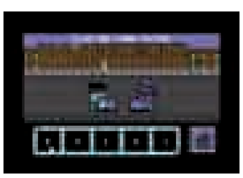
HEROQUEST & SPACE CRUSADE
(Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, C64, DOS, Spectrum)
Milton Bradley board games *Heroquest* and *Space Crusade* were converted to computer form by Gremlin, using an icon-driven interface to replace the movement of pieces on the board. Expansion packs containing extra quests for both games were also published.



RAMROD **(Amiga version unreleased – development stopped in 1991)**
Ramrod was heavily hyped by issue 1 of ACE magazine for its gorgeous isometric 3D graphics, and a later ZZAP preview proclaimed it was going to be released after many delays. Programmer Kevin Bulmer (aka Dementia) finally pulled the plug in 1991.



SWITCHBLADE **(Amiga, Amstrad, Amstrad Plus cartridge, Atari ST, C64, Spectrum)**
Your quest was to find the 16 pieces of the Fireblade scattered around an underground maze. Combat was by a tricky method of holding fire for different attack strengths. The 8-bit ports took some time to appear but are worth checking out.



THE SHOE PEOPLE
(Amstrad, C64, Spectrum)
Based on the popular TV cartoon, *The Shoe People* is a series of challenges for younger players in maths and English, with bright colourful graphics. There is also a creative section called Margot's Magic Colouring Book, which was released as a stand-alone title.

1 9 9 1 - 2



LOTUS TRILOGY **(CD32)**
Three Lotus games on a single CD was a real bargain for CD32 owners starved of good games.



NIGEL MANSELL'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
(Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST, CD32, DOS, Mega Drive, SNES, Spectrum – C64 version never released)
Building on the *Lotus* games, Gremlin grabbed the fastest moustache in the world and set about unleashing a race game on multiple formats. Commodore Format's write-in campaign to get a C64 version released was not successful, but Your Sinclair generated enough interest in a Spectrum version for it to be published (along with *Toyota Celica GT*, another title that did not make it to the C64).



NEWMAN HAAS INDY CAR RACING **(Megadrive, SNES)**
When Nigel Mansell made the switch to Indy Car racing in the USA, Gremlin acquired a licence for that too. It might be cynical to suggest it was the same game with different graphics, but the different types of circuit do keep it interesting.



DESERT STRIKE: RETURN TO THE GULF
(DOS)
Electronic Arts produced the *Strike* series, isometric games featuring a helicopter, and Gremlin published the PC versions. Each level has a series of tasks from rescuing hostages to blowing up enemy installations. *Desert Strike* was controversial at the time, due to its Middle East setting inspired by the first Gulf War (Operation Desert Shield as it was known).

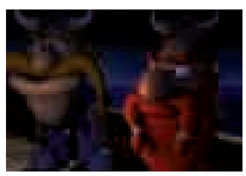
1 9 9 3 - 4



NORMALITY **(DOS)**
With programming legend Tony Crowther involved, this icon-driven PC adventure game portrays a bleak future where conformity is everything. You control Kent as he tries to escape the, "Norms", police who track down anyone who is different. Looking in, under and around objects then using the point and click interface to combine them (or even wear them) is the only way to meet with success.

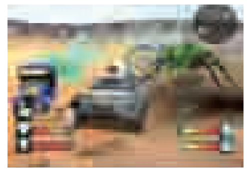


LOADED **(PS1, Saturn)**
Pop Will Eat Itself provided the soundtrack for this violent overhead-view shooter/maze game. *Re-Loaded*, the sequel, followed less than a year later and took the action outdoors. But with the PlayStation proving adept at 3D games, this genre was on the way out.

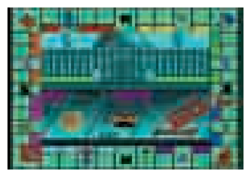


LOST VIKINGS 2 **(PS1)**
Converted from the SNES and published by Gremlin as part of the deal with US company Interplay, *Lost Vikings 2* is great fun. Like the original, you control three Vikings through alien worlds, using their different abilities (one with a shield, one with sword and bow, the other who can run and jump) to escape. Fiendish puzzles and platforms await.

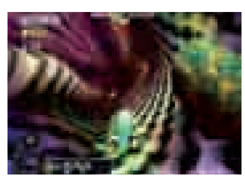
1 9 9 5 - 6



BODY HARVEST **(N64)**
DMA Design developed this, Nintendo turned it down, and then Gremlin bought DMA and published it to a mixed reception. A time-travelling soldier must fight the alien invasion on foot or in a variety of vehicles. With obvious comparisons to *Starship Troopers*, players must overcome puzzles as well as blast the aliens to pieces.



MONOPOLY & MASTERMIND
(PS1 & PC respectively, published by Hasbro)
More board game action bought to the screen by Gremlin. *Mastermind* is the classic game of trying to guess a hidden sequence of colours, with each guess being marked to show if you have the right colour or the right position in the sequence. *Monopoly* has been converted to computers and consoles many times (most notably by Leisure Genius) in the Eighties but even flashy 3D graphics can't hide the fact that it is far more fun to pick up and move the pieces on a real board…



N20 **(PS1)**
Fans of *Tempest* and *Rez* might want to take a look at this PlayStation game. Fly down a tunnel, shoot the enemies and pick up the coins. US dance act The Crystal Method provide the soundtrack, but Gremlin don't provide you with a new pair of eyes… which is what you'll need after the game throws all its psychedelic effects at you.

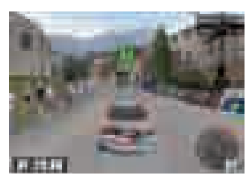
1 9 9 7 - 8



THE BEST OF GREMLIN
(Amiga, Windows)
A CD compilation containing more than 30 of Gremlin's best titles, compatible with the Amiga and including an emulator for Windows. Of course, you could always track down issue 3 of Retro Gamer, which came with a coverdisk full of Gremlin titles across 7 different formats.



HOGS OF WAR **(PS1, Windows)**
If you can get past the meat-based puns and the long PSOne loading times, there's a lot of fun to be had with this 3D strategy game. Rik Mayall's voice-overs can grate after time, but you do get attached to your little pigs as they gain promotion and rack up the kills. With so many weapons to slaughter your enemies with and a choice of multi-player modes, this is one you will keep coming back to.



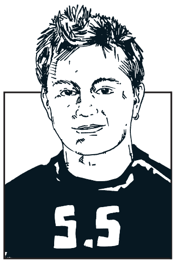
RALLY MASTERS **(PS1)**
Gremlin was working with developers Digital Illusions before the Infogrames take-over, but on its release *Rally Masters* was lost in a sea of PlayStation rally games. There are many types of licensed car (including classic rally cars of the Seventies and Eighties) and good handling. You can also take part in the "Race of Champions" – a head-to-head race around a tricky circuit with a crossover, an event held every year at the end of the World Rally Championship.

1 9 9 9 - 2 0 0 3

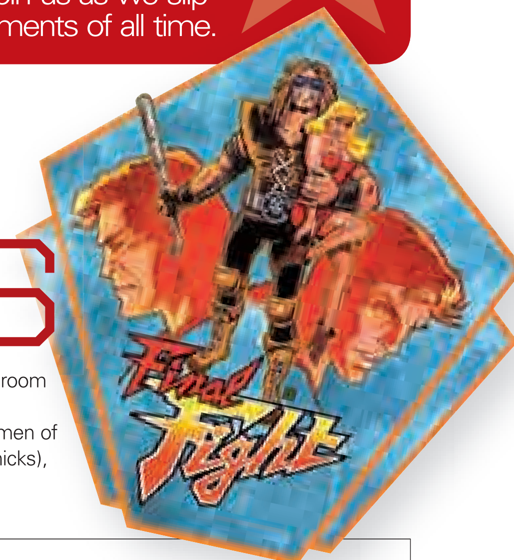
INCREDIBLE INNOVATION » SCARY END OF LEVEL BADDIES » FINDING HIDDEN TREASURE » BEAT THAT GAME

MAGIC MOMENTS

Sometimes you'll play a game and certain parts of it will stay in your mind forever. Join us as we slip on our rose-tinted spectacles and look back at some of the greatest videogame moments of all time.

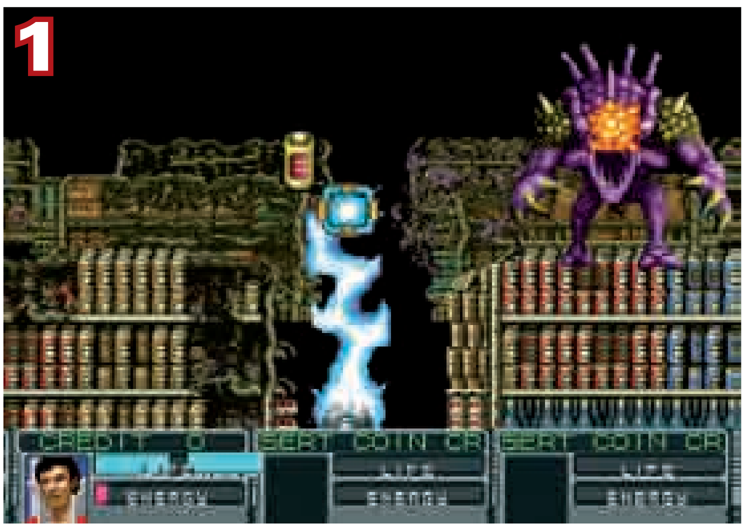


BEAT-'EM-UP BONUS BOUTS

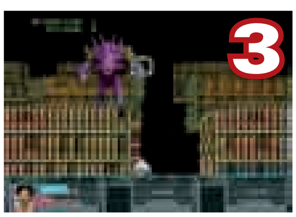


Pottering about in a shiny red sports car, or dallying around on a platform waiting to jump on a cutesy, doe eyed mushroom is fine, but what if you're not the kind of gamer who likes their toast lightly buttered with a nice pot of tea?

If that's the case, you're probably a beat-'em-up junkie, just like me. But, much as it pains me to say, even us hard men of videogaming occasionally need some light-relief (it can't be a constant stream of ass-kicking, beer-bingeing and hot chicks), and it is to this end that many of the finest beat-'em-up developers kept us engaged by deft use of the 'bonus bout'.







» Who doesn't want to do this at the supermarket?

» There's never a shop assistant when you want one

ALIEN STORM

» **SYSTEM:** ARCADE » **RELEASED:** 1990 » **PUBLISHER:** SEGA » **DEVELOPER:** IN-HOUSE

An enjoyable, yet run-of-the-mill fighting game, *Alien Storm* made particularly good use of background paraphernalia by turning much of it into a morphing Martian for you to laser, kick and pistol-whip about the friggin' street.

The bonus round, however, was one of the more unusual as it broke from the fighting genre and adopted a First-Person-Shooter motif. Although the aliens still leap from behind the tinned veg to attack you, rather than relying on hand-to-hand combat as you did outside, you choose the business end of your ray gun and blast them back into orbit.

Wiping out the enemies was only a necessity though, as the real purpose (and fun) of this bonus was wreakin' up the shop! You make it your irresponsible business to clear the shelves of every last item, being awarded with various goodies for the rampant carnage you exact on the poor shopkeeper's wares. Splendid, shameless fun that breaks up this average fighter quite succinctly.

GOLDEN AXE

» **SYSTEM:** ARCADE » **RELEASED:** 1989 » **PUBLISHER:** SEGA » **DEVELOPER:** IN-HOUSE

The beat-'em-up bods at Sega could have simply had us smash barrels or urns or whatever to restock our magic potions in its epic sword and sorcery brawler, but instead it employed some ultimately nebulous little fellows from which to extract the supernatural broth using unnecessary force.

While sitting around the campfire, these tricksy little urchins would run up and make off with your goodies. But as soon as our gallant heroes caught up with the thieving little smurf wannabes, they'd chase after them and boot the irksome midgets in recompense.

A successful toe up the Khyber and they'd shed bottles of magic for players to make bombs out of. Not a particularly necessary aspect of this great game, but it's nice to raise an occasional smile in an otherwise serious outing. And who doesn't like kicking small things?



» "I might be a Dwarf, but I'm still bigger than you!"



» What colour does a Smurf turn if you choke him?



FINAL FIGHT

» **SYSTEM:** ARCADE » **RELEASED:** 1989 » **PUBLISHER:** CAPCOM » **DEVELOPER:** IN-HOUSE

A fighting game without comparison, *Final Fight* contained one of the most deliciously gratuitous bonus bouts ever seen. Simple, sadistic and the stuff of fantasies.

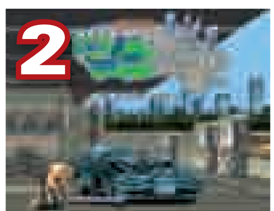
I still remember the first time I saw this bonus round. Player 2 and I just stood there, looking confused at the car. When we finally figured it out, we'd only just scratched the paintwork before the time ran out. You'd better believe we started again so we could do it properly, and the second time, it was scrap metal inside of ten seconds; demonstrating the subtle, money making genius of a beautifully executed bonus bout.

Between levels two and three, the players happen upon one of the Mad Gear's cars at a petrol station. They've got one minute before the driver returns, and take it upon themselves to remodel his pride and joy. The extra points are worthless compared to seeing the car's owner cry like a little bitch when he returns to his severely pimped ride.



» Time to get the lead out.

» Take it like a man! At least I didn't nick the stereo as well





» This guy looks like Michael Flatley



» "Have you seen my yo-yo?"

SHINOBI

» **SYSTEM:** ARCADE » **RELEASED:** 1989 » **PUBLISHER:** SEGA » **DEVELOPER:** IN-HOUSE

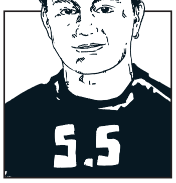
***Shinobi* occupies the fuzzy grey area betwixt platformer and fighter, but the bonus bout of this classic assassinate-'em-up undeniably meets the criteria of today's discussion group.**

Looking across a series of conveyor-belts, an entire clan of suicidal ninja shin along the platform, foolishly putting themselves in range of Joe-san's deadly shuriken. Successfully staving off the approaching ninja grants the player an extra life. What's unusual about this action time-out is the moment when an enemy finally descends on our hero and stops the bonus round in failure.

You know you've lost a couple of seconds before the round actually ends, as you see 'the one that got away' jump from the last ledge and leave the screen. Suddenly, he reappears with a metallic thud as he lands square on in front of Joe in a ready stance. The superb, detailed graphics of the ninja landing and the abrupt cessation of action are used to great effect, making this bonus bout one worth losing.

CLASSIC GAMING ON A BUDGET

CHEAP AS CHIPS



If there's one thing we've learned about retrogaming, it's that your money can stretch an amazingly long way. Granted, a mint copy of *Radiant Silvergun* is going to cost you a small fortune, but, trust us, there are plenty of worthy titles out there that can be picked up for less than a fiver. Hiring a mercenary or renting a rhino for the weekend can be a costly affair, we're told, so *Rex* makes a pocket-friendly alternative to both.



REX

- » **SYSTEM:** ZX SPECTRUM
- » **RELEASED:** 1988
- » **PUBLISHER:** MARTECH GAMES
- » **DEVELOPER:** THE LIGHT

It beggars belief that we still go out and buy games, when munificent websites such as worldofspectrum.org are providing titles like *Rex* for free (with permission, I might add). Quick, slick and stylised, *Rex* made enthralling playability on a simple machine look easy, nailing players to the joystick in a way that's seldom seen in today's wintry gaming climate. Oozing colour and detailed animation, The Light's combined debut and finale was a sure winner even before the addictive gameplay had you hooked.

Although the back story isn't as relevant now as it was in 1988 (I suppose environmentalism never goes out of fashion, but toward the end of the Eighties, even Mrs Thatcher pretended to care about the ozone layer), the anthropomorphic eco-warrior took to his guns in order to prevent the oh-so-callous human race from making use of a megalithic, contaminating power station built on his home planet. Our horny hero enters in good assassin fashion through the underground catacombs that all denizens of wrong doing invariably build their 'impenetrable' fortresses upon.

Chocked-full of gun turrets and armed minions (despite heavy munitions and power stations being a volatile combination), *Rex* treks his way to the top of the tower via a variety of routes, depending on which direction tickles the player's fancy.

Whichever path is taken, rest assured the stalwart rhino will need a calm and analytical approach to thwarting the humans and their defences to make it to the tower, though hanging around in strategic contemplation is a sure way to get him shot. *Rex* is a most difficult game.

One of the most impressive features has rarely been reproduced with any alacrity: the rapid hit bonus. Shooting down an enemy soldier is fine, but keep piling the bullets in and he'll keep staggering backwards, being peppered like so much fillet steak until you finally let up on the trigger – as much fun as it is unnecessary. It does, however, exemplify the anguish and frustration *Rex* must have been feeling to embark on such a righteous mission – to save his planet from pollution.

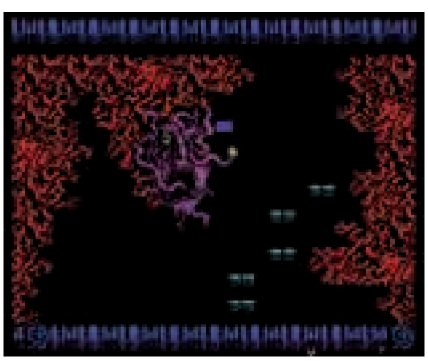
As luck would have it, he came armed with enough firepower to, well… bring down a power station. By collecting 'power bubbles' left by bested enemies, his weapons output is granted progressively destructive might. Used in conjunction with a personal force shield (that depletes during use), he is more than a match for the towering fortress, assuming the player is bold enough of character to endure the mammoth task.

The game is split nicely in two (originally making use of side B on the tape): the mines that lead to the base of the structure, then the ascension of the tower itself. This second level, of sorts, was accessed by an ingenious 16 digit anti-cheat code that told the game engine in what condition you had completed the first phase (how many lives remained, etc). Despite following the same style of invigorating gameplay, the new enemies and vastly different architecture on Side B flavoured the proceedings in a whole new way, adding immensely to *Rex*'s longevity.

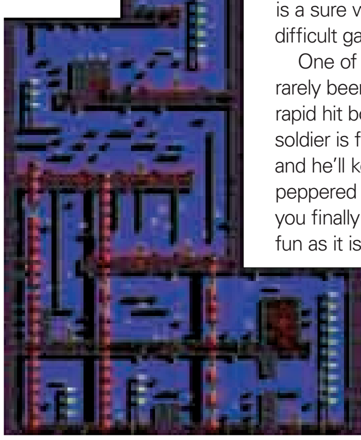
All in all, *Rex* is worthy of a Retro Gamer Sizzler award, except it's in the wrong section of the mag. Perfect for the portable emulation of your choice, you are not allowed to call yourself a platformer fan until you've at least seen the tower in this marvellous monster mash.



» Got stuck in the catacombs? Try this code: 8980898909608208 (cheater)



» The evil at the top (reminds me of my boss in his office…)

» The Living Tower is mighty high, and something unpleasant waits at the top…



» Game over; world saved. Don't you just love it when a plan comes together?

eMag

THE MAKING OF...

ANOTHER WORLD

From the stunning opening sequence to its shocking conclusion, Another World dragged players on a rollercoaster ride through a living, breathing alien landscape. In this revealing feature, Martyn Carroll Gamer talks to creator Eric Chahi, and discovers that the story behind Another World is as extraordinary as the game itself.





» The 'hero' of *Another World* attempts a futile peace gesture…



» … only to end up blasted by a stun gun and suspended in a cage



» *Another World*'s exterior scenes are the most stunning, with immense structures stretching toward the clear blue sky

These days it's hard to imagine a commercial game being conceived, designed and developed by an individual, whereas back in the early Eighties such a feat was commonplace, with bedroom coders churning out 8-bit hits. As the market matured and the games became more and more complex, programmers were pooled together to create slick development teams capable of meeting criteria and hitting deadlines. The days in which individuals were able to deliver their singular visions were seemingly over.

Then in 1991 the gaming public was invited to glimpse, *Another World* (known as *Out Of The World* in the US), an arcade adventure single-handedly created for the Commodore Amiga by Eric Chahi. During the game's two-year development period, the Frenchman filled the role of designer, programmer and artist. He even painted the cover art. Aside from the audio, which was supplied by close friend Jean-Francois Freitas, *Another World* was solely Eric's creation. In the evolving 16-bit era this was almost unheard of.

ANOTHER AUTEUR

Eric's route into game creation was fairly typical, with him spending much of his teenage life experimenting with computers. "During the school holidays I didn't see a lot of sun," he tells us with some pride. "Programming quickly became an obsession and I spent around 17 hours a day in front of a computer screen."

After leaving school he decided to pursue game creation as a full-time job. With several titles already published for the Oric-1 and Amstrad CPC in France, a small software company called Chips quickly hired him. "The boss took me on as a programmer and I said, to his surprise, that I wanted to be a graphic artist instead. I was becoming tired of programming and my main area of interest was fantasy illustration, painting and animation. So I stayed for a year with the company, developing my graphic skills. Then, in 1989, I met Paul Cuisset at Delphine and I become the lead artist on *Future Wars*."

Released in 1990, *Future Wars* was a memorable point-and-click adventure that benefited greatly from Eric's graphics work. Somewhat surprisingly, he admits that one of the joys of working on *Future Wars* was that he was surrounded by an experienced team, meaning that he no longer had to struggle with projects single-handedly. But by working as part of a team, Eric had to sacrifice overall creative control. This did not sit well with the unique vision he had for *Another World*.

"I felt that I had something very personal to communicate and in order to bring my true vision to others, I had to develop the title on my own. But the transition from 8-bit to 16-bit had been difficult for me; programming became more and more complex and I'd get lost trying to manage it all. Luckily, many excellent books and tools were released that enabled easy development on the Amiga. Thanks to these, I felt confident I could go back to programming, and was sure I could handle the project on my own. I didn't decide to go it alone for the challenge, but because I felt it was necessary to create my game without any commercial pressure."

So after finishing work on *Future Wars*, Eric was given a choice: either contribute to Delphine's next game or forge ahead with his own project. He opted for the latter and work on *Another World* began.

To call Eric an auteur is apt as his "true vision" is perhaps more cinematic than any other game of the early Nineties. Beyond the opening movie, which sees red-haired nuclear scientist Lester Cheykin sucked into an alternate dimension following a failed experiment, there's no real narrative as such. Lester simply moves from location to location, desperately trying to avoid grim death lurking around every corner. Within the first few minutes Lester must escape from a watery grave, stamp on a spawn of poisonous slug-things and outsmart a snarling dog-beast. The strange alien world he has been accidentally transported to is alive with danger, and the opening scene sets the game's frantic pace and distinctive tone. After running into Buddy, an alien friend, Lester grabs a laser gun and must fight his way through an alien citadel swarming with enemy soldiers. There is never any mention of Lester returning home – the primary concern is to stay alive in this brutal world.

The game plays like a short movie, featuring scenes rather than levels. And each scene is beautifully staged, with a cinematic quality that elevates the game far above its peers. "I wanted to create a truly immersive game in a very consistent, living universe with a movie feel," he says. "I never wanted to create an interactive movie. Instead I wanted to extract the essence of a movie – the rhythm and the drama – and place it into game form. To do this I decided to leave the screen free of the usual information aids like an energy bar, score counter and other icons.



» A stroke of genius. Eric's preliminary studies for his striking cover-art painting



» Gaining a weapon finally allows you to fight back against *Another World's* inhabitants

IN THE KNOW



» **PUBLISHER:** INTERPLAY, US GOLD, VIRGIN
» **DEVELOPER:** ERIC CHAHI/DELPHINE
» **RELEASED:** 1991
» **GENRE:** 2D GRAPHIC ADVENTURE
» **EXPECT TO PAY:** £3-£10



"ANOTHER WORLD IS A GAME OF SURVIVAL IN A HOSTILE WORLD, AND IT REALLY IS ABOUT LIFE AND DEATH" ERIC CHAHI

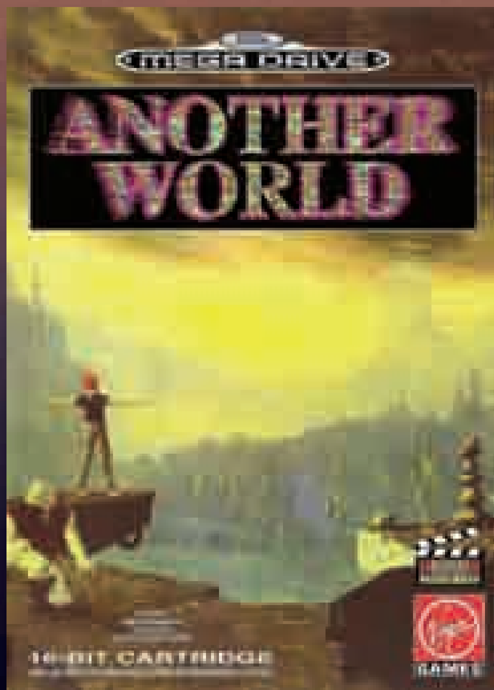
ANOTHER WORLD

HEART BROKEN

During the development of *Another World*, Eric was allowed to work without any pressure from publishers. But it was inevitable that such an acclaimed game would open a few eyes. Interplay entered into discussions with Eric over a sequel – for Sega's Mega-CD system. "Interplay wanted to do a sequel for the Mega-CD, mainly to justify the use of the CD unit," he says. "I must admit, I wasn't up for a sequel, and was worried about what Interplay would do to my game. After discussions their guys convinced me. But, I did insist that I didn't want a true sequel, so I offered the idea of replaying the original adventure from another angle by controlling Buddy. Sadly, Interplay didn't do a very good job. The soul of the original game was missing, and I felt more than a little deceived when I saw that my original concept had been destroyed." The sequel was subtitled *Heart Of The Alien* and it's telling that many gamers don't even know the game exists.



"BY DOING ANOTHER WORLD I LEARNT A LOT ABOUT SUGGESTION. I LEARNT THAT THE MEDIUM IS THE PLAYER'S OWN IMAGINATION" ERIC CHAHI



» The SNES and Mega Drive releases came as a surprise to some as the game certainly wasn't a typical console title



» All the sprites in the game were assembled from scalable vector shapes

Everything had to be in the universe, with no interruptions getting in the way."

VISION THING

Eric reveals that Jordan Machner's *Karateka* strongly influenced the game's visual style, but inspiration was also drawn from a variety of other sources. "I was influenced by everything I liked at that time. This included pictorial art and the movie *Star Wars*. Science fiction books, comics and fantasy art also inspired me. Painters like Michael Whelan, Richard Corben and Frank Frazetta also provided some material for me to draw ideas from."

To create the look of *Another World*, Eric took the unusual step of using polygons to create a 2D game. And for that he owes a debt of gratitude to Dirk the Daring. "I played the *Dragon's Lair* port for the Amiga, which boasted incredible full-screen action scenes, and became hooked on achieving similar life-like animation. The graphics in *Dragon's Lair* weren't polygons, but were compressed bitmaps read directly from the disk. I thought I could do the same with polygons since the animation was flat, so I wrote some vector-based code. The idea was to use polygons not only for movie-like animation and cutscenes, but also for the sprites. This proved to be a major advantage because you had large sprites that were scalable and took up less disk space than traditional sprites."

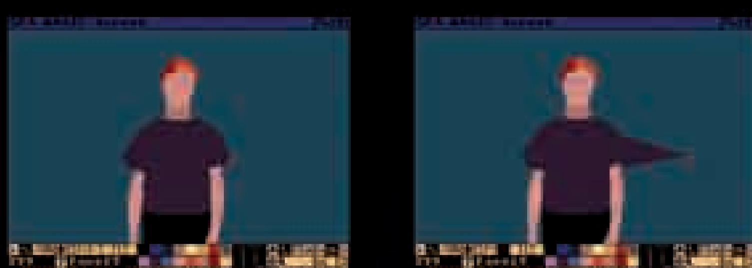
Eric then used the rotoscoping process to breathe life into the flat vector shapes. The technique, used so successfully in the original *Prince Of Persia* game, allowed for realistically animated characters. The only downside to the polygonal approach was that the level of graphical detail had to be sacrificed. "2D polygon techniques are great for animation but the price you pay is the lack of detail. Because I couldn't include much detail, I decided to work with the player's imagination, creating suggestive content instead of being highly descriptive. That's why, for example, the beast in the first scene is impressive even if it is only a big black shape. The visual style of *Another World* is really descended from the black and white comic book style, where shape and volume are suggested in a very subtle way. By doing *Another World* I learnt a lot about suggestion. I learnt that the medium is the player's own imagination."

DIRECTOR'S CUT

Following its debut on the Amiga, an Atari ST version appeared and other ports were planned. To address concerns that the game was too short, the PC and console versions included a lengthy bonus scene that slotted neatly into the main game.

"After the initial Amiga release many gamers were frustrated by the short length of the game. Even though I was exhausted after two long years of intense development, I agreed with the critics and I thought it was important to add something. But I didn't want to simply add a level just to make it longer. The key thing for me was to create a level that was very coherent with the game's structure. The best place for this was just before the arena when Buddy saves Lester's life. I thought it was the right time to enhance the interaction between these two characters." Those who have played the longer version will recall that in the extra scene, Lester repays the favour by saving Buddy's life.

Besides adding content, Eric was also forced to remove some elements, much to his annoyance. Unsurprisingly, these changes related to the Super Nintendo



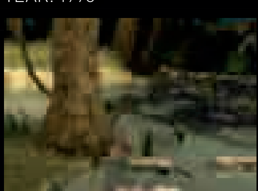
» These editor screens, supplied by Eric, show how easy it was to edit the 2D vectors

DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

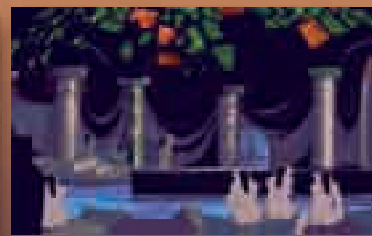
INFERNAL RUNNER
SYSTEMS: AMSTRAD CPC
YEAR: 1985

FUTURE WARS
SYSTEMS: AMIGA, ATARI ST, PC
YEAR: 1990

HEART OF DARKNESS
SYSTEMS: PLAYSTATION, PC
YEAR: 1998




» An enhanced 3DO version was released in 1994, featuring hand-painted backgrounds and a full music score


» The original version (above), and the censored SNES version, with not a builder's crack anywhere in sight



version. "Nintendo of America refused to include any bloody situation or nudity. I had to remove any evidence of blood, right down to the smallest red pixel. I even had to change the alien saliva colour in some close-ups from pink to green. But the most ridiculous thing was the request to remove the cracks from the alien women's asses in the bath scene! Nintendo wanted to remove three measly pixels that made a tiny little line to make sure it looks like a bathing suit and not a naked person. I just hate this confusion between nudity and pornography."

Petty censorship problems aside, the new scene made for a longer, more revealing adventure. But the game's short length was still called into question. Eric admits that the abrupt ending didn't help matters. "I think that the unhappiness of playing a short game was amplified quite a lot by the ending sequence. This unfortunately disappointed many players, as it's a very unusual ending, and not something that many games players had seen before." For those few who have yet to complete *Another World*, the game ends with Buddy and a critically-ill Lester taking to the skies on the back of a winged beast, their destination and future unknown. As Eric says, many players didn't exactly warm to it, expecting Lester to return to his own world in time for tea and biscuits.

RECURRING DREAM

Thankfully, Lester's adventure is far from over, as a homebrew version of *Another World* was recently released on the Game Boy Advance and a mobile phone port is now available. "The mobile version features retuned gameplay, with enhanced background graphics depending on the phone model," Eric tells us, before revealing details of a new title, his first since 1998's *Heart Of Darkness*. "I'm also working on an original project, but I can't say anything more about that now…"

With the game now available for new platforms, potentially opening up a whole new audience, we asked Eric how he thought the game had aged. In particular we wondered how the difficulty level and the instant death scenarios would sit with more modern gamers. "It's true that *Another World* is difficult. When I played it back a year ago, I discovered how frustrating it can be sometimes – and breath-taking at the same time. The trial and error aspect doesn't disturb me though. *Another World* is a game of survival in a hostile world, and it really is about life and death. Death doesn't mean the end of the game but it is a part of the exploration, a part of the experience. That's why the death sequences are so diversified. To solve many puzzles I recognised that you had to die at least once, and this certainly isn't the philosophy of today's game design. It is a controversial point in *Another World*'s design, because it truly serves the emotional side of things and the player's attachment to the characters, but it sometimes has a detrimental effect on the gameplay. Because of this, *Another World* must be considered first as an intense, emotional experience."

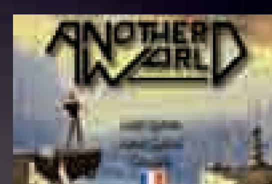
Before we let Eric dive back into his secretive new project, which we can only hope is some kind of spiritual successor to *Another World*, we asked him about the character of Lester. Was this unlikely hero based on anyone in particular? Himself maybe?

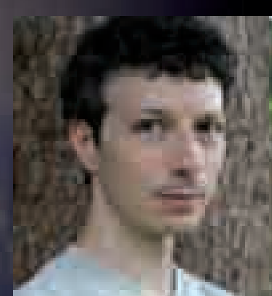
"Hmm… well I used myself for the rotoscoping technique, so Lester has my corpulence, but the comparisons stop there, nothing more!"

SMALL WORLD

Another World was ported to the Game Boy Advance in 2004 by Cyril Cogordan, a long time fan of the original game. He initially reverse-engineered the code from the Atari ST version before Eric became aware of the project and provided him with the original source code. We asked Eric why the game was released as a free download and not as a commercial product? "Cyril released the game on his website about 18 months ago without permission," he reveals. "He thought *Another World* was abandonware, so I quickly got in touch and told him that he was crazy to do this without knowing if he had the rights or not. He then agreed to remove the download, to the dismay of the GBA community. But as Cyril had done a great job, I thought we'd try to get his version released commercially. I cleared the legal problems and approached different publishers but received little response. We decided not to push the commercial front any further, and the game is now available for free once more." Cyril's port is available from www.foxysofts.com.






» Programmer, designer and artist Eric Chahi spent two years single-handedly creating *Another World*

> "NINTENDO OF AMERICA REFUSED TO INCLUDE ANY BLOODY SITUATION. I HAD TO REMOVE ANY EVIDENCE OF BLOOD, RIGHT DOWN TO THE SMALLEST RED PIXEL" ERIC CHAHI

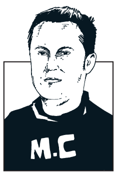
SPECIAL THANKS TO:
Aaron Birch and, of course, Eric Chahi.

THE TRAP DOOR

THERE IS SOMETHING DOWN THERE…



- » **PUBLISHER:** PIRANHA
- » **RELEASED:** 1986
- » **GENRE:** GRAPHIC ADVENTURE
- » **FEATURED HARDWARE:** SPECTRUM
- » **EXPECT TO PAY:** LESS THAN A QUID



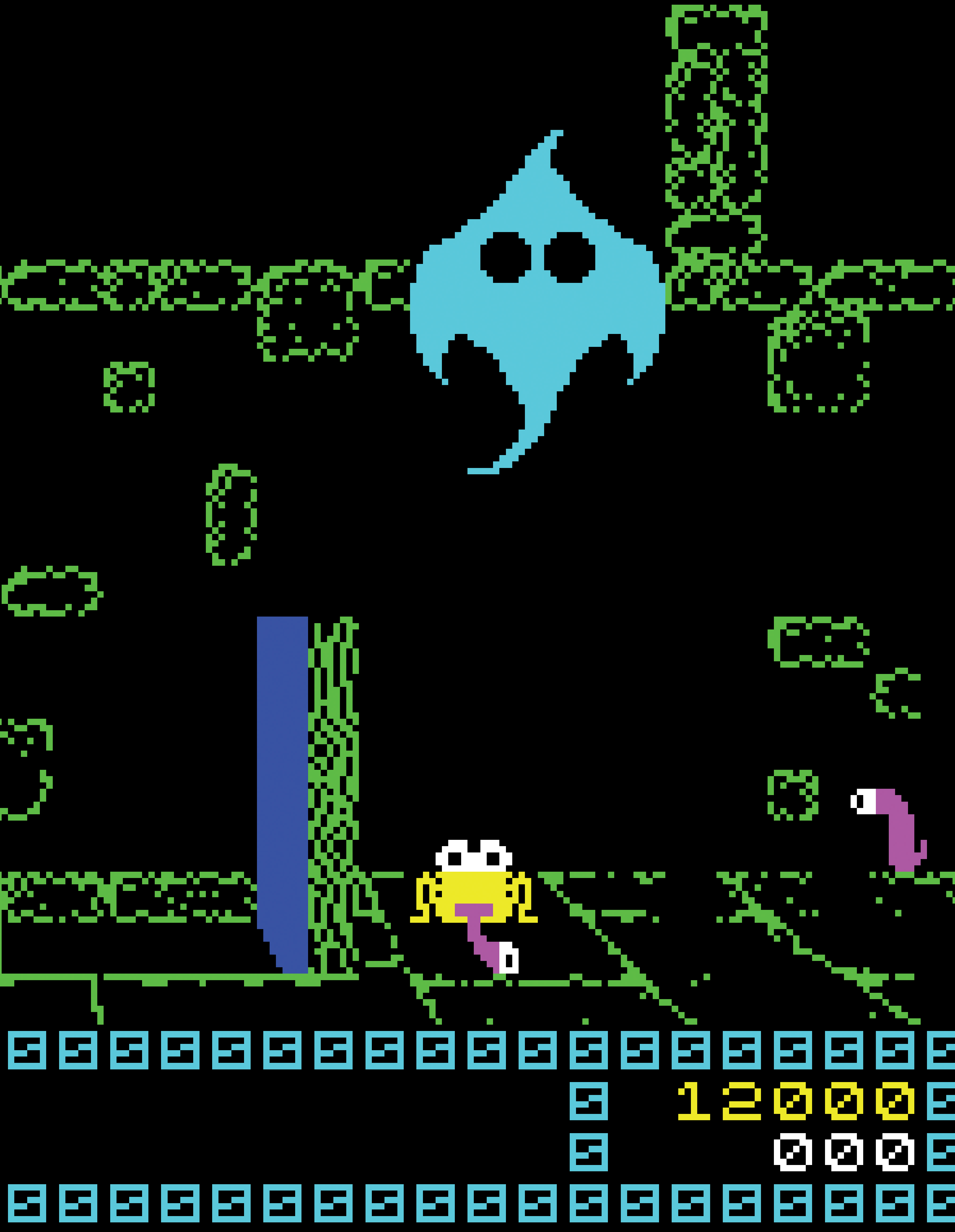
HISTORY

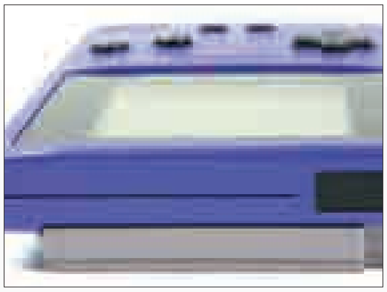
Berk's aghast expression says it all really. The Thing who lives upstairs has called for a can of worms, causing chaos down in the basement. Berk opens the trap door to release some worms, only for an evil spirit to escape from the depths below, while Drutt, Berk's spider-like pet, starts eating the damn worms, sucking them into his mouth like pieces of spaghetti. Meanwhile, beneath the trap door, a cast of weird and wonderful characters are waiting to emerge, including a fire-breathing robot and a bug-eyed thing with a penchant for stamping on stuff. "A joke's a joke," as Berk once said in the animated TV show on which the videogame is based, "but this goes way beyond the realms of light entertainment…"

I don't remember much about *The Trap Door* TV series. When it first aired in 1984 I was still in short trousers and a lot of the warped humour whizzed right over my head. Don Priestley's game, on the other hand, made a much greater impression on me and I can clearly recall certain scenes in glorious Specnicolor: Berk boiling 'slimies' in a cauldron; Berk filling a vat with oversized eyeballs; Berk chasing after a freaky purple bird, trying to catch falling eggs in a frying pan. While the various puzzles were devilishly inventive, it was the super-sized graphics that made the game so memorable. Don Priestley used this bold visual style before and after *The Trap Door*, but never to better effect. In terms of looks it's as close to the TV show as you could ever hope to see on the Spectrum.

Going back to the game today is a slightly shocking experience, not because it hasn't aged well, but because it's actually better than I remember it. Thanks to its great graphics, smart gameplay and superb presentation, this quirky classic still manages to leave me open-mouthed – a bit like poor old Berk.




12000
000






POWER
GAME BOY COLOR
pong

Year Released: 1998

Original Price: £80

Buy it now for: £5-£10

Associated Magazines: Nintendo Official Magazine

Why the Game Boy Color was great… The Game Boy Advance was released so soon after the Game Boy Color that many of its best games were lost in the rush to upgrade to the next big thing. Returning to the GBC now reveals a wealth of great games that you never knew existed, especially those available on import… besides, if you want to train a monkey to box in-between sending it out for curry then you can only do it on the Game Boy Color.





GAME BOY COLOR

AFTER RELYING ON THE ORIGINAL GAME BOY FOR OVER NINE YEARS, NINTENDO FINALLY UPGRADED TO A COLOUR MODEL, ONLY TO REPLACE THE MACHINE TWO YEARS LATER. ASHLEY DAY LOOKS AT ONE OF NINTENDO'S MOST SHORT-LIVED CONSOLES AND SHOWCASES THE GAMES YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED THE FIRST TIME AROUND.

Rumours of a colour Game Boy began to circulate almost as soon as the original monochrome handheld was released in 1989. Atari's Lynx proved that colour gaming was possible on the move, which prompted some to question why the big N' chose the less impressive black and white route. Nintendo's answer, as always, showed that it had done its homework. Colour handhelds, although possible, were not practical: the massive drain on batteries and reliance on oversized hardware forced the user to play at home (close to a plug socket) and completely defeated the point of a portable games console.

Nintendo chose instead to produce a handheld that was cheap to run and light enough to carry around, pledging to only upgrade the console when technology caught up with demand. That strategy proved more than wise as the Game Boy went on to sell over 70-million units despite the lack of colour. A string of hits from Nintendo's familiar brands, as well as new properties like *Pokémon*, ensured that the handheld fought off all competition and stayed in the hands of gamers for the next nine years until technology finally caught up.

By November 1998 Nintendo made good on its promise and revealed the Game Boy Color to the world at that year's E3. The console originally used a tech demo, featuring schools of multicoloured fish, that clearly showed how advanced the handheld was in comparison to its forebears. By featuring a crisp 256x256 pixel TFT (Thin Film Transistor) screen the GBC could output vibrant colour visuals, without eating the batteries, whilst also keeping the machine small and light. In addition, the processor was twice as fast as the original Game Boy, 56 colours could be displayed from a palette of 32,0000 and the unit included an infrared device that could wirelessly transfer data between two machines. Since various coloured machines

Hardware Home-brew

As console manufacturers move on to better hardware, the home-brew community is often left to discover what more can be squeezed out of an ageing system and the Game Boy Color is no exception. The portability of the device has proved especially attractive to the home-brew developers who have managed to use the GBC for many purposes that Nintendo never dreamed of. Most impressive of these is surely the GPS BOY, a Global Positioning System that uses a custom piece of software to communicate with a GPS receptor board to display the user's current position on a full colour on-screen map. Some receptor boards are now so small that they barely protrude from the Game Boy Color's cartridge slot. If you fancy converting your Game Boy Color into a cheap GPS device then head over to http://members.fortunecity.com/kookie/# where you can download the ROM and read a handy tutorial.









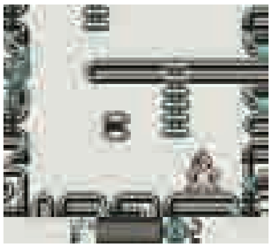
» Spain's Club Nintendo magazine got rightfully excited about the motion sensing *Kirby Tilt 'N' Tumble*

had proved successful for Nintendo in the past they planned to release the GBC in six different colours with more to follow. The first six were Atomic Purple, Berry, Teal, Dandelion, Lime and Grape although only Atomic Purple initially made it to Europe in time for launch.

With the GBC's impressive specs and long battery life (from only two AA batteries) Nintendo fans were eager to see what games were in store for them but some were disappointed as the first batch of releases did little to take advantage of the new handheld's power. As with the transition from NES to SNES, Nintendo was reluctant to alienate those who had stood by the Game Boy for so long and implemented a backwards compatibility system that turned out to be both a blessing and a curse. The Game Boy Color was fully backwards compatible, making it capable of playing thousands of classics straight out of the box in a simple colour scheme. Many of the original Game Boy games had a default colour palette which Game Boy Color made use of to ensure that Kirby stayed pink and Yoshi green for example. Those games that did not have a default colour scheme could be altered by holding down different combinations of buttons upon powering up the machine, although this did have its drawbacks as the palette always coloured the sprites differently to the background, which meant that the games that tried to surprise the player, by having sprites suddenly move, didn't quite work as intended.

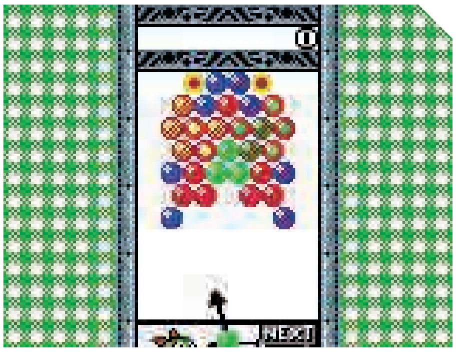
The backwards compatibility was a first for any handheld and a smart move, but Nintendo took the plan a step further and ran the risk of angering those who had paid the £80 asking price for the GBC. To ease the move from monochrome hardware to the Game Boy Color the first few games would be playable on the original Game Boy in black and white. This meant that owners of the 'Game Boy Classic ' could enjoy the new games without feeling pressured into upgrading but, frustratingly, it also meant that early adopters of the GBC had to make do with launch titles that didn't take full advantage of the handheld's capabilities. Early titles like *Tetris DX* and Link's *Awakening DX* were decent enough but some gamers couldn't help but feel that they were playing monochrome games that had been 'coloured in'. This continued until the release of *Super Mario Bros DX* (1999): a cartridge that used the full power of the GBC to perfectly recreate a portable version of the NES classic for the first time.

Quality software was finally beginning to appear but the Game Boy Color hadn't quite captured the hearts and wallets of portable gamers just yet as it faced its stiffest ever competition. Although the previous Game Boy had enjoyed an unbelievable 99 per cent market share, the new console was up against two new rivals that were carving major inroads towards Nintendo's once captive audience. Bandai's



» An example of a monochrome Game Boy game running on the Game Boy Color

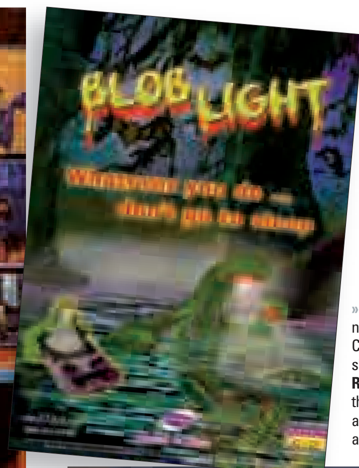
» **Below:** Some games, like *Bust A Move*, benefited from the colour upgrade more than others



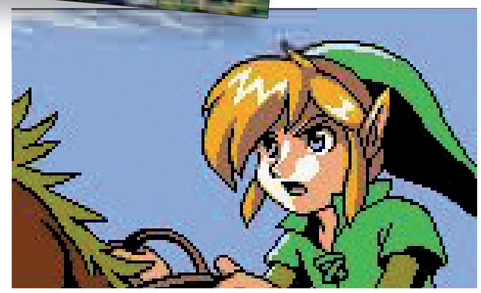
» **Below:** Taito's *Monkey Puncher* is one of the GBC's best-kept secrets and a great source of amusing Japlish







» **Far left:** If proof was ever needed that the Game Boy Color was a magnet for shovelware then this is it. **Right:** An advert for one of the GBC's many flood light add-ons highlights the lack of a backlight in the handheld



» **Above:** Capcom actually put three GBC *Zelda* games into production but only two could unfortunately make it to release

COLOR



Wonderswan exploited Nintendo's rocky relationship with Squaresoft by securing the rights to all portable versions of *Final Fantasy* and captivated the Japanese market in the process. SNK meanwhile had a handheld of their own, in the shape of the Neo Geo Pocket, which was very popular with hardcore beat-'em-up fans. Nintendo needed a strong, system-selling game if it was to fend off these two considerable enemies. It needed a 'killer app'. It needed "Pokémania".

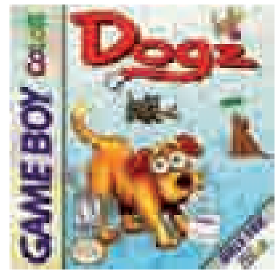
With well over 16 million copies of the original *Pokémon* sold by 1998, the popular RPG can take sole credit for saving the monochrome Game Boy from obsolescence. The original game had spawned a world-wide addiction for all things *Pokémon* and kids across the globe would hungrily consume anything with Pikachu's face slapped on it, but what they really wanted was a brand new Game Boy adventure. After all, even though Nintendo had exploited the *Pokémon* brand to the nth degree, the original RPG by Game Freak was still a very compelling and highly polished game. *Pokémon Gold* and *Silver* were released in 1999 in Japan, 2000 in the USA and 2001 in Europe. The considerable gaps in release dates can be attributed to the time needed to translate the in-game text but for Nintendo they had the added bonus of prolonging the Game Boy Color's life span on a global scale. The new *Pokémon* did the trick and, even though it could be played on a monochrome Game Boy, Pokémaniacs all over the world bought a Game Boy Color just so they could see their favourite Pocket Monster in the correct hue. Sales of the handheld, helped by a "*Special Pokémon Edition*" skyrocketed and by 2001 had reached an estimated 50 million units.

With sales of the Game Boy Color guaranteed by *Pokémon*'s colour debut in 1999, the machine started to receive much more support from third party developers. The handheld had previously been littered with shovelware (mostly sports games and cartoon licences) but the major developers soon realised that there was major sales potential in the GBC and started to take the handheld seriously. Konami offered an original adventure called *Survival Kids* as well as an exclusive *Metal Gear* game, Rare created a handheld *Perfect Dark* and ported the SNES's *Donkey Kong Country* whilst Capcom ported *1942* and *Street Fighter Alpha* and even created a GBC *Resident Evil* game that debuted in the UK. Not all of these games stood up to the high standard that their names suggest but some of them were excellent and showed that the Game Boy Color had more to offer than just Nintendo franchises and children's games.

By 2001 the Game Boy Color was just beginning to hit its stride. Sales of the machine were healthy and both Nintendo and third-parties were turning out some great software until the life span of the handheld was cut short when Nintendo released its next generation handheld: the Game Boy Advance. The GBA arrived in Europe on the 22nd of June 2001, only two and a half years after the Game Boy Color, making the GBC Nintendo's shortest lived console after the Virtual Boy. Quite why Nintendo chose to supersede the capable hardware so soon after its launch is still a mystery and remains a questionable decision.

As the Game Boy Advance naturally gathered momentum the Game Boy Color stayed in production for a short while. At the slightly reduced price of £60 it cost half as much as the GBA, making it an affordable alternative to the new Game Boy and it quickly became the handheld that parents opted to buy for very young children who would not notice or care about the difference in performance. As such, most publishers returned to the safe market of cartoon licences but there were still some worthwhile releases in the GBC's final months. Most valued of these were two new *Zelda* games: *The Oracle Of Ages* and *The Oracle Of Seasons*. Each was co-developed by Nintendo and Capcom and they were considered such great additions to the Zelda series that many Game Boy Advance owners happily bought them despite their being developed for a technically inferior machine. Development continued but, due to the diminishing popularity of the console, many new games were only released in certain territories. The US got Enix's *Dragon Warrior III* for example, whilst Japan got several *Dance Dance Revolution* games in 2001 and three exclusive *Goemon* (*Mystical Ninja*) games. One of the greatest Game Boy Color games to make it to Japan and the States (but not Europe) was the innovative *Kirby Tilt And Tumble*, a *Marble Madness* style game that actually required the handheld to be tilted in order to roll Kirby around the stage. *Tilt And Tumble* will only work on the first model of Game Boy Advance so if you have a GBA SP or a Micro then it's worth investing in a Game Boy Color just to play this highly inventive Nintendo title.

The final Game Boy Color game was, *Hamtaro: Ham Hams Unite*, released in Europe in January 2003 a little over four years after the launch of the hardware. As with many of the GBC's last games, Hamtaro was lost in the midst of hundreds of Game Boy Advance games and was sadly overlooked by most gamers. This has given the Game Boy Color an unfair reputation as the one Nintendo handheld with few worthwhile titles; but this simply isn't the case. Dig around for the games that made it out between 2001 and 2003 and you are sure to find many lost gems that, although overlooked, were great titles well worth your attention.



Something in the Air

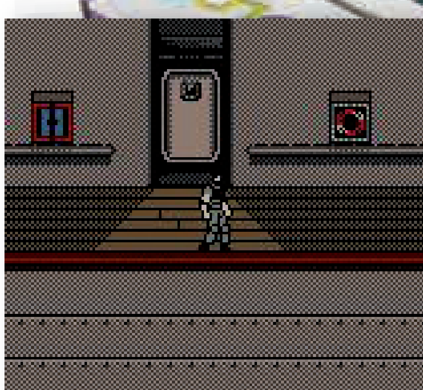
Think the Game Boy Color's infrared link was an underused gimmick? Well, with a two-inch range, it mostly was but that didn't stop developers from trying to get some kind of functionality out of it. Here's a list of some of the most interesting uses:

Super Mario Bros DX: Merge high scores
Pokémon Gold/Silver: Trade Pokémon
Mission Impossible: Point any TV remote at the GBC to clone its signal then use your Game Boy to control the TV
Austin Powers: Beam secret messages to an opponent (not very useful when you're sitting next to each other)
Robopon: Point a TV remote at the GBC to open unlockable chests
Bomberman Max: Each unique signal from an infrared device unlocks a different secret area
Pokémon Crystal: Link up to the cyberpet Pocket Pikachu Color to unlock hidden items and monsters
Perfect Dark: Exchange unlocked multi-player maps
Dogz: Trade dogs and toys





» *Super Mario Bros DX* was the first full colour *Mario* game to appear on a handheld



» The Game Boy *Resident Evil* was originally a port of the PlayStation version but was canned due to poor playability

GAME BOY COLOR

PERFECT TEN GAMES

It may have had a short production run but Nintendo's Game Boy Color still had plenty of great games available for it, from *Resident Evil Gaiden* to *Metal Gear Solid*. Before you write in though, any top ten is going to be entirely subjective and, of course, open to violent debate, and that's what Retro Gamer is all about. Like-minded gamers, indulging in nostalgia. Bring it on.



01

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: LINK'S AWAKENING DX

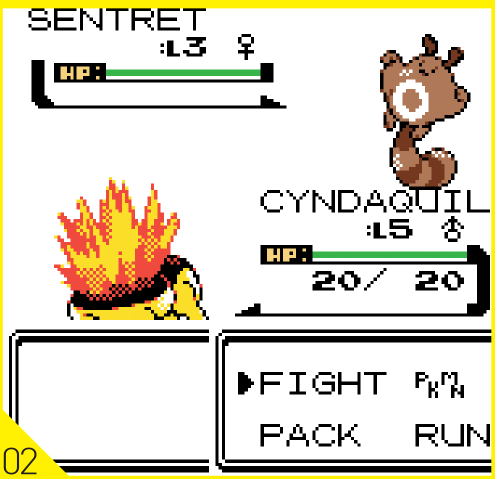
» **RELEASED:** 1998
» **PUBLISHED BY:** NINTENDO
» **CREATED BY:** NINTENDO
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** SUPER MARIO KART

01 **We felt cheated when Nintendo's deluxe version of *Link's Awakening DX* appeared.** After all, it was essentially a five year-old Game Boy game (albeit with one brand new dungeon, Game Boy Printer support and full colour graphics). Nevertheless *Link's Awakening* remains as captivating as ever, and once you get drawn back into its beautifully crafted game world you'll never look back. Link's quest to wake the Wind Fish is filled with memorable characters, well-designed dungeons and the sort of magical gameplay that Nintendo seems able to create with its eyes shut. A great RPG that will please *Zelda* fans the world over.

POKÉMON GOLD/SILVER

» **RELEASED:** 2001
» **PUBLISHED BY:** NINTENDO
» **CREATED BY:** GAME FREAK
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** POKÉMON RED

02 **The GBC's first two *Pokémon* titles not only gave you gloriously coloured critters to battle with, they also brought several excellent new gameplay mechanics to the table – the most ingenious being a real-time clock.** Pokémon and certain events now appear at specific times of the day, giving *Gold* and *Silver* a 'real life' quality missing from previous *Pokémon* titles. Another handy new feature was the addition of the cellphone that made it easier to keep in touch with key characters. You were even able to breed Pokémon, although sadly it was impossible to create mutant offshoots. The end result is a sprawling adventure that no RPG or *Pokémon* fan should be without.



02

SUPER MARIO BROS DX

» **RELEASED:** 1999
» **PUBLISHED BY:** NINTENDO
» **CREATED BY:** NINTENDO
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** SUPER MARIO LAND

03 ***Super Mario Bros DX* is yet another great example of Nintendo taking a game from its impressive back catalogue and revitalising it for a brand new generation of gamers.**

Not only did you receive a perfect port of Mario's first real adventure, Nintendo also included extras to ensure that it deserved its 'deluxe' tag. Challenge mode required you to complete all of the levels, collecting five red coins and a Yoshi egg within a time limit, while Versus mode was a race against Luigi that made full use of the GBC's link-up cable. Unmissable.

METAL GEAR SOLID

» **RELEASED:** 2000
» **PUBLISHED BY:** KONAMI
» **CREATED BY:** KONAMI
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** GRADIUS

04 **Despite abandoning the single-screen cell-based design of previous 2D instalments, *Metal Gear Solid* (aka: *Ghost Babel*) is regarded by most as one of the GBC's finest releases.** It takes the best elements from previous games, and adapts them to work within the GBC's limitations. There are now individual connected stages, which eliminates backtracking and allows shorter bursts of play. Plenty of well-implemented stealth sections, a bountiful roster of gadgets and weapons, an assortment of wonderfully depraved bosses, plus the expected storyline of betrayal and moral ambiguity, make for the perfect handheld adventure!

TETRIS DX

» **RELEASED:** 1999
» **PUBLISHED BY:** NINTENDO
» **CREATED BY:** NINTENDO
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** SUPER MARIO BROS

05 **You seriously have to hand it to Nintendo, it certainly knows how to get people to part with their hard-earned cash.**

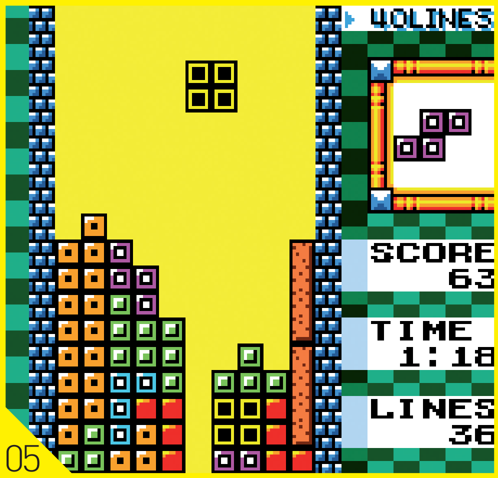
Tetris was already owned by practically everybody that had access to a Game Boy (it was originally given away free with the machine) but people still went crazy when *Tetris DX* was eventually released. Not only could you now play the game in fantastic colour, but Nintendo had also included a variety of new gameplay modes that made the popular puzzler even more hellishly addictive than it already was. You would be doing yourself a mis-service if you let this one pass you by.



03



04



05

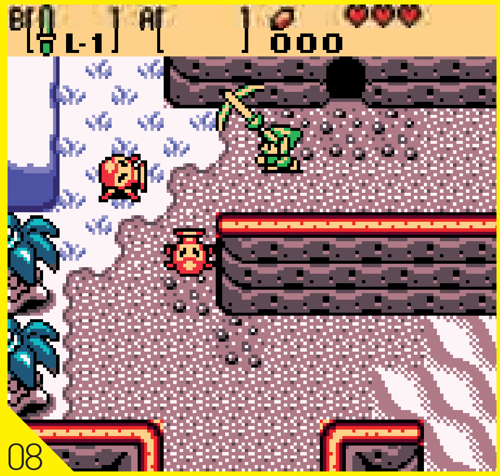




06



07



08

R-TYPE DX

» **RELEASED:** 1999
» **PUBLISHED BY:** NINTENDO
» **CREATED BY:** BITS STUDIO
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** CONSTANTINE

06 **Shoot-'em-up fans got real value for money with *R-Type DX* as it came equipped with five variations of Irem's hit blaster.** You get both the colour and black-and-white versions of *R-Types I* and *II*, and Bits created the all-new *R-Type DX*, an amalgamation of the first two games with spruced up graphics, some nifty parallax scrolling and a new level to fight your way through.

Of course, *R-Type DX* wasn't without its problems (the GBC's small screen meant that certain parts of the game were particularly tricky to navigate), but there's no denying that it remains one of the greatest shooters available for Nintendo's portable system.

WARIO LAND 3

» **RELEASED:** 2000
» **PUBLISHED BY:** NINTENDO
» **CREATED BY:** NINTENDO
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

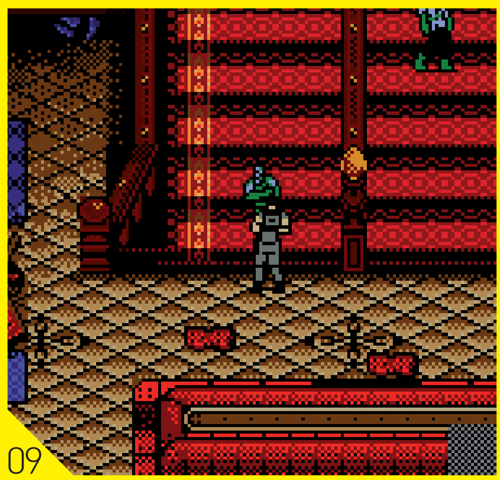
07 **Now more famous for his *WarioWare* franchise, Nintendo's anti-hero has starred in a superb selection of platformers.** Wario's third Game Boy outing is widely considered his best. The graphics feature huge, well-drawn sprites complete with fantastic animation. Wario now has several new transformation skills and there are plenty of new gameplay touches such as levels that switch between night and day after they are completed. Wario doesn't start out with as many skills as in previous titles, but Nintendo gradually allows him to reclaim them as the game progresses. A solid and amusing platformer.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: ORACLE OF SEASONS/AGES

» **RELEASED:** 2001
» **PUBLISHED BY:** NINTENDO
» **CREATED BY:** NINTENDO/CAPCOM
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE MINISH CAP

08 **Released simultaneously, *Oracle Of Seasons/Ages* featured detailed visuals, memorable music and plenty of new items that enhanced the already rich gameplay.**

Both were similar in design, but they were centred on certain gameplay aspects of the *Zelda* universe. *Seasons* featured a strong emphasis on fighting, while *Ages* often required you to solve devious puzzles. They could also be started with a code that enabled you to begin either title with items and abilities gained from the previous game.



09

RESIDENT EVIL GAIDEN

» **RELEASED:** 2001
» **PUBLISHED BY:** VIRGIN INTERACTIVE/CAPCOM
» **CREATED BY:** M4 LTD
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** MARY KATE AND ASHLEY: WINNER'S CIRCLE

09 **Many gamers were disappointed with *Resident Evil Gaiden* as it shared little in common with its PlayStation brethren.** No more spooky camera angles, no more carrying a certain amount of items and no more scares. Don't be disappointed, though; *Gaiden* remains a superb actioner with a gripping storyline, plenty of recognisable characters and a brand new way of destroying zombies.

When you meet said zombies, the game switches to first-person and shows them approaching. A power bar appears at the bottom of the screen and careful hits stop your foes and allow you to continue exploring. An underrated classic.

STRANDED KIDS

» **RELEASED:** 1999
» **PUBLISHED BY:** KONAMI
» **CREATED BY:** KONAMI
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** LOST IN BLUE

10 **Anyone who has played the DS sequel *Lost In Blue* will know exactly what to expect from this cult hit that combined the best elements of *Zelda* and *Monkey Island* to great effect.** As a virtual castaway, you must learn to survive the dangerous environment of a desert island and find a means to escape using only the materials you find lying around and the help of a native chimp. Whether exploring the island, building tools and weapons or discovering the secrets of fire, *Stranded Kids* rewards thoughtful experimentation as well as resourcefulness to create an enchanting adventure that you'll play until the batteries run dry.

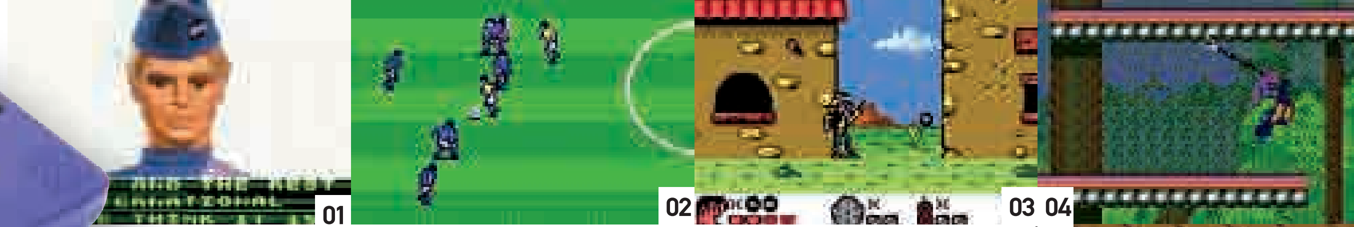


10



GAME BOY COLOR and the rest...

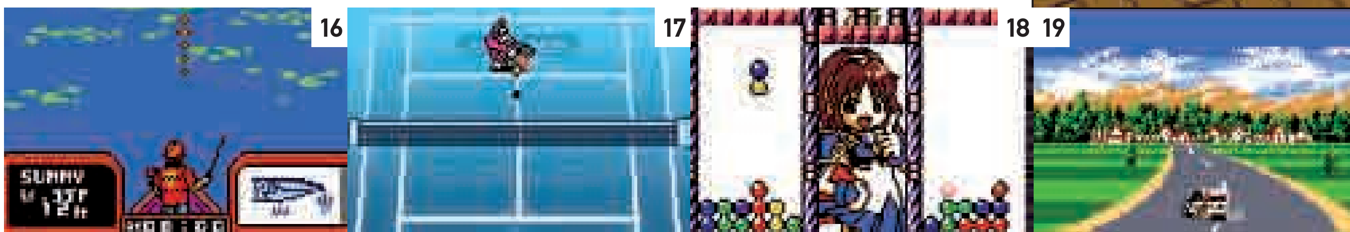
Nintendo's handheld console was a superb little machine that supported an array of different genres. From classic Nintendo hits to superb puzzlers, the Game Boy Color had something for everyone.



01 02 03 04



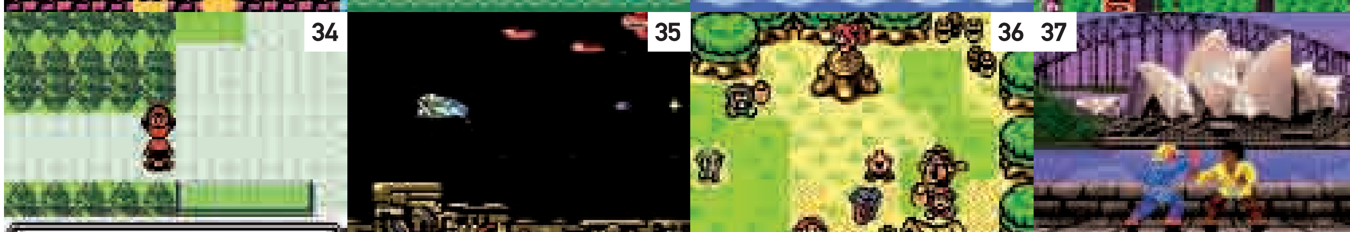
10



16 17 18 19



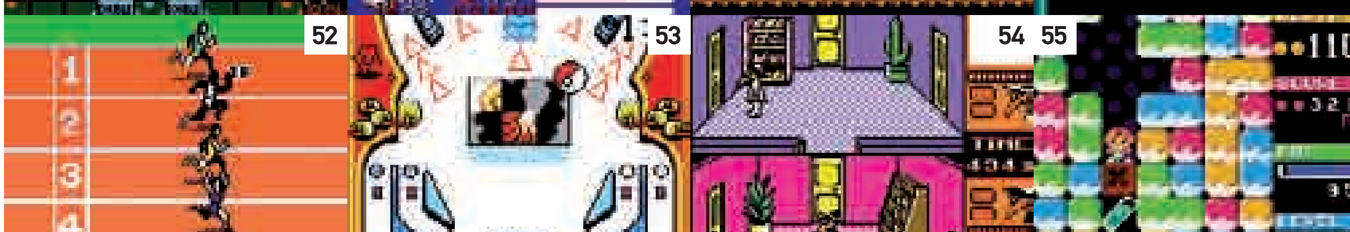
25 26 27 28



34 35 36 37



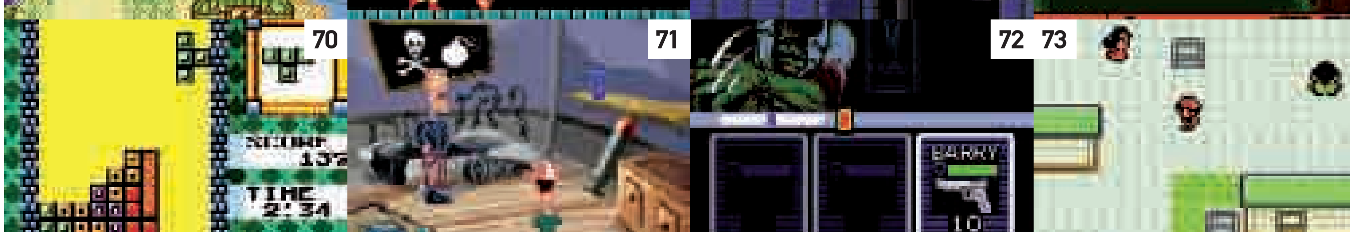
43 44 45 46



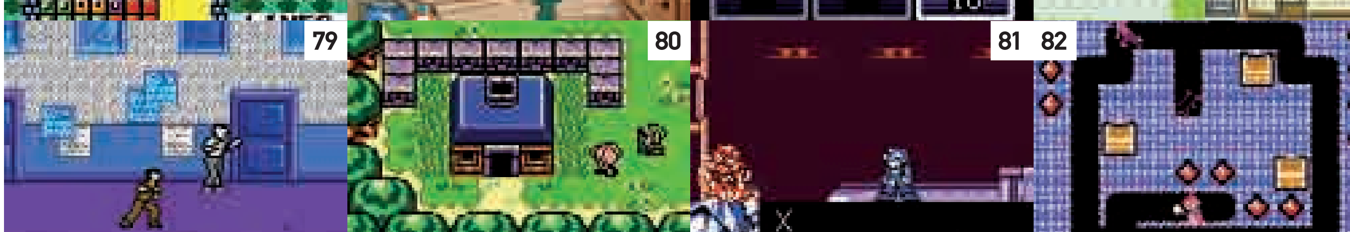
52 53 54 55



61 62 63 64



70 71 72 73



79 80 81 82

01 THUNDERBIRDS
02 INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER '99
03 LUCKY LUKE
04 BIONIC COMMANDOS: ELITE FORCES
05 GHOSTS 'N GOBLINS
06 KLAX
07 PAPERBOY
08 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA: WARRIOR'S DREAMS
09 FIFA 2000
10 CATZ
11 HARVEST MOON GB
12 DEER HUNTER
13 AUSTIN POWERS: OH BEHAVE!
14 BUBBLE BOBBLE
15 3D POCKET POOL
16 BASS MASTERS CLASSICS
17 MARIO TENNIS
18 POCKET PUYO PUYO 4
19 TOP GEAR POCKET
20 WARIO LAND 3
21 CHASE HQ: SECRET POLICE
22 720°
23 CANNON FODDER
24 PERFECT DARK
25 LODE RUNNER
26 STRANDED KIDS
27 WORMS ARMAGEDDON
28 BURGER PARADISE
29 HAMSTER PARADISE
30 MAGICAL TETRIS CHALLENGE
31 AZURE DREAMS
32 DENKI BLOCKS
33 METAL GEAR SOLID
34 POKÉMON SILVER
35 R-TYPE DX
36 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE ORACLE OF SEASONS
37 INTERNATIONAL KARATE
38 MARIO GOLF
39 1942
40 POCKET BOMBERMAN
41 RAMPAGE: WORLD TOUR
42 TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX
43 SCRABBLE
44 BATMAN BEYOND: RETURN OF THE JOKER
45 LEMMINGS & OH NO! MORE LEMMINGS
46 SUPER BREAKOUT
47 TOP GEAR POCKET 2
48 NSYNCH GET TO THE SHOW
49 BUST-A-MOVE 4
50 MAGICAL TETRIS CHALLENGE
51 RAINBOW ISLANDS
52 TRACK & FIELD GB
53 POKÉMON PINBALL
54 SPY VS SPY
55 MR DRILLER
56 SPACE INVADERS
57 HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC
58 GALAGA: DESTINATION EARTH
59 BLADES OF STEEL
60 COMMANDER KEEN
61 LEGEND OF THE RIVER KING 2
62 SUPER MARIO BROS DX
63 PRINCE OF PERSIA
64 ACTION MAN: SEARCH FOR BASE X
65 ELEVATOR ACTION EX
66 TOMB RAIDER: CURSE OF THE SWORD
67 WACKY RACES
68 CAESAR'S PALACE II
69 MEGA MAN XTREME
70 TETRIS DX
71 THE FISH FILES
72 RESIDENT EVIL GAIDEN
73 POKÉMON GOLD
74 DONKEY KONG COUNTRY
75 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER
76 WETRIX
77 BEAT MANIA
78 MONKEY PUNCHER
79 TUROK 2: SEEDS OF EVIL
80 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: LINK'S AWAKENING
81 MEGA MAN XTREME 2
82 QUEST FANTASY CHALLENGE
83 WWF ATTITUDE
84 DEJU VU 1 & II
85 POKÉMON CRYSTAL
86 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE ORACLE OF AGES
87 BALLOON FIGHT


05
06
07
08
09
11
12
13
14
15
20
21
22
23
24
29
30
31
32
33
PUZZLE
COMPLETE!
NO ITEM
NO ITEM
38
39
40
41
42
People
John Clark
47
48
49
50
51
56
57
58
59
60
65
66
67
68
69
Big 6
X: This place is
74
75
76
77
78
MAKE THE MONKEY
83
84
85
But we don't know
This rock with
the ♠ is a sign!
86
87



THE DEFINITIVE

GRADIUS

THERE ARE TWO FACTS THAT EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT KONAMI'S SERIES OF GRADIUS GAMES. ONE OF THEM IS THAT THE FIRST GRADIUS INTRODUCED THE IDEA OF CUSTOMISABLE POWER-UPS, COLLECTED BY PICKING UP ICONS LEFT BY DEAD ENEMIES AND ACCUMULATING THEM UNTIL THEY COULD BE USED TO "BUY" A VARIETY OF UPGRADES FOR YOUR SPACESHIP. AND THE OTHER ONE IS THAT BY DOING SO, IT CREATED THE TEMPLATE ON WHICH ALL MODERN SHOOT-'EM-UPS ARE ULTIMATELY FOUNDED. INCONVENIENTLY, NEITHER OF THESE FACTS IS TRUE.



The weird thing about *Gradius* is that it wasn't nearly as influential as people think. The collecting-credits power-up system that was its ground-breaking innovation hasn't, actually, been copied by that many other games apart from other *Gradius* games. Don't believe us? Then how many can you name? There were a couple on the Amiga (Team 17's ill-thought-out *Project X* and Kaiko's glorious *Apidya*, ironically later re-released by Team 17), and if you really, really stretched the point you could just about, maybe, make a case that the *Aleste* series sort of copied the mechanic slightly a little bit. Ish. But beyond that it's hard to think of any games not made by Konami that took on the *Gradius* method of upgrading your spaceship – most preferring the direct "pick it up and there it is" weapon-adding style of *R-Type*.

The second weird thing is that this supposedly genre-defining feature wasn't even present in the first game in the *Gradius* line. Because according to the intro sequence of the GBA's *Gradius* game (*Gradius Advance*, or *Generation*, or *Galaxies*, depending on where you bought it); the first game in the *Gradius* series was actually the 1981 arcade release, *Scramble*, a game with no power-ups in it at all.

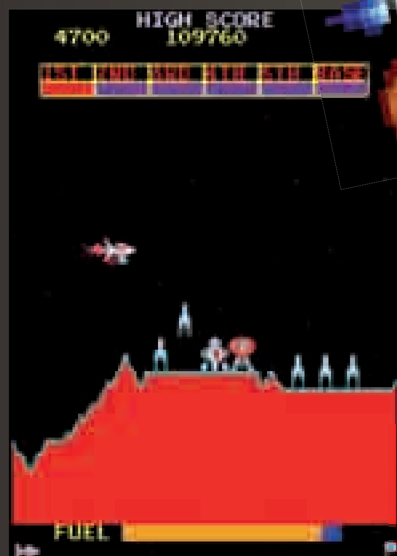
Oh man. So we're two paragraphs in and both of the things everyone thought they knew about *Gradius* turn out to be totally wrong. We're spoiling everything! But luckily, there are lots of things about the *Gradius* series that you probably DON'T know, and which ARE true. And that's where we come in, because here at Retro Gamer we're tired of seeing people talk ill-informed nonsense about old games. Any idiot can copy down a load of rubbish off the Internet, but we're here to set out the definitive truth once and for all.

Because the truth of the matter is that *Gradius* and its many sequels (as we're about to find out, the most recent *Gradius V* would more properly be titled *Gradius XII* or even *Gradius XV*, depending on how you look at it) deserve to be remembered for more than a couple of lazy myths. Though the series as a whole is wildly uneven (particularly in the case of some insanely difficult Japan-only releases), it does contain several of the finest examples of the horizontally-scrolling shooter genre ever created (including almost certainly the best one of all time), and as well as definitively listing the entire *Gradius* family line, this feature's here to sift out the gold from the sediment for you: the lovely readers of Retro Gamer. Because you're worth it.

1981
SCRAMBLE

It's a little contentious to include this one, but according to Konami it's part of the canon, so let's take its word for it – *Gradius Zero*, if you will. (And we'll just draw a Stalinist veil over *Scramble*'s own arcade sequel, *Super Cobra*...) A major coin-op hit in its day, *Scramble* does indeed contain a number of elements that could with hindsight be seen as *Gradius* blueprints – the distinctly different kinds of landscape within the game (most shmups, if you think about it, don't even *have* land), the combination of airborne enemies and ground attack, and the "maze" section of the final stage which has clear parallels in most of the *Gradius* games. More importantly, it's still a brilliant game, and after being inexplicably overlooked for home ports in its own time (the only official one, bizarrely, was for the Vectrex), it was eventually converted to several formats including the GBA and PSOne.

PLAY IT NOW ON: Konami Arcade Advanced (GBA)



» The wonderful *Scramble* remains a thing of beauty and, according to Konami, is where the *Gradius* franchise originated



1985
GRADIUS AKA NEMESIS

It's a shame that the Japanese name became the worldwide choice for the series – "*Nemesis*" is a much punchier title, and actually means something; though it's possible that "*Gradius*" was a corruption of the name of the famous Roman sword the gladius, given that "l" and "r" are the same letter in Japan. Anyway, the first game in the series proper did away with *Scramble*'s fuel gauge, brought in the iconic power-ups, and the rest is history. It was converted with varying degrees of success to scores of home formats, some of the ports being barely recognisable as the same game, but the PC Engine hosted the definitive version.

PLAY IT NOW ON: Gradius Collection (PSP)

1987
NEMESIS 2

No, not "Gradius 2". The first official sequel in the *Nemesis/Gradius* series was in fact this little-known, completely original title released only for the MSX computer standard. It has a dodgy non-canon plot featuring "Dr Venom" in "Cosmic Year 6666", weapons with extra levels of power, and a brilliant structure where you have to play the first seven levels as normal, then go back through them in reverse order to reach "Level Zero", the real final stage. Also, if you fly into dead bosses, you discover bonus levels and weapons. The scrolling is rather jerky – symptomatic of a CPU being pushed to its limits – but this is a superb and inventive game. The final release had one level fewer than the beta version which is also in circulation nowadays, though you do need to know where to look.

PLAY IT NOW ON: Emulator, with BlueMSX



» Yes the plot is ludicrous, but we'll forgive Konami, because *Nemesis 2* is just so dang good. Reach Level Zero and you may even earn our respect. Maybe

1988
GRADIUS 2 AKA THE AMBITIONS OF GOFER AKA VULCAN VENTURE

The coin-op sequel was a brutally hard game, but grabbed gamers' attention with a spectacular first level featuring huge fire-dragons flying out from behind a galaxy of blazing suns, and with the eye-catching debut of the Ripple Laser (included in four possible power-up configurations players could choose from at the start). There were far fewer home ports this time, but of those there were, the NES version (with some very different levels, including the first) and the PC Engine Turbo Duo CD release (with a whole new secret stage) were particularly noteworthy. In either of those, incidentally, you'll be doing extremely well if you ever see level 3.

PLAY IT NOW ON: Gradius Collection (PSP)



» If you've made it this far, you're either a shoot-'em-up genius, or a dirty cheat that steals from the church collection box when you think no one else is looking

1988
NEMESIS 3 – EVE OF DESTRUCTION AKA THE AMBITIONS OF GOFER – EPISODE 2

My head's starting to hurt already. "It is now 6809 Nemesis Year", according to the torturously long and complicated intro sequence, and – well, let's not even try to get it all to make sense, and stick to the game. *Nemesis 3*'s first level resembles the opening stage of *Vulcan Venture*, but otherwise this is another all-new MSX-only *Nemesis*. The graphics have decreased in size in order to force yet more detail and performance out of the sobbing hardware, and the difficulty makes *Gradius 2* look like a walk in the park. Downhill. On rollerskates. If you so much as glimpse level 2 of this one, viewers, I'll give you the money myself.

PLAY IT NOW ON: Emulator, with BlueMSX



» *Nemesis 3* not only pushed the MSX to its limits, it also turned out to be one of the toughest games in the series. There's a crisp £10 waiting for whoever completes it

1989
GRADIUS 3 DENSETSU (TRANS: "FROM THE LEGEND COMES THE MYTH")

The uncompromising savagery of arcade *Gradius 2* frightened off a lot of *Gradius* fans, so Konami rushed out another sequel just a year later, with a slightly more manageable difficulty level. Apart from that, the main innovations of the third *Gradius* were the inclusion of an ill-judged into-the-screen 3D level – a feature which was subsequently and wisely abandoned as suddenly as it was introduced – and the much more successful Edit Mode, which enabled players to precisely customise which combination of the games' growing array of power-ups they wanted to have available. An excellent SNES port kept the *Gradius* name alive for a new generation of gamers.

PLAY IT NOW ON: Gradius Collection (PSP), Gradius III+IV (PS2)



» The best addition to *Gradius 3* was undoubtedly its superb Edit Mode. 'Pimp my Vic Viper'? You bet you ass. Although the fact that the difficulty had been tweaked also helped



» Bored of always playing through the same levels? The GB's *Nemesis* allowed you to tackle them any way you fancied. Very handy

1990
NEMESIS

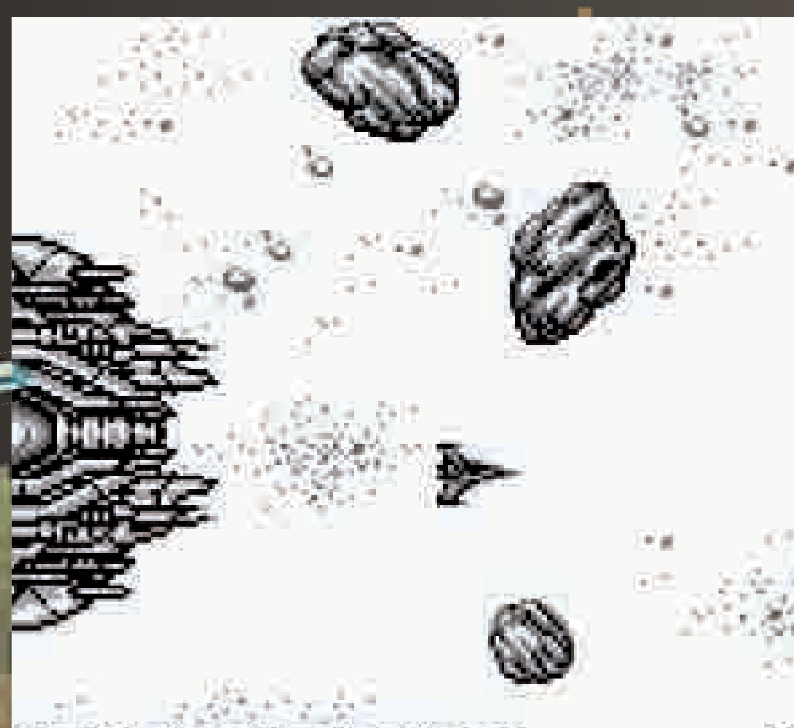
What? Just "*Nemesis*"? Despite lacking any distinguishing subtitle, the Game Boy version of *Nemesis* wasn't a port of the original – only a couple of the five levels (plus secret ones) even vaguely resemble the coin-op game, and most of the content is completely new, as is the structure in which you can play the five main stages in any order you like. It's a brilliant little game, however, a masterclass in how to design for (what was at the time) the blurry, faint little mono display, but one which stands up superbly now on the crystal clarity of the GBA or emulator screen.

PLAY IT NOW ON: Your GBA/KIGB.

1991
GRADIUS – INTERSTELLAR ASSAULT AKA NEMESIS 2 – THE RETURN OF THE HERO

Not confused enough yet? The second Game Boy incarnation, (the first having been called "*Nemesis*" even in Japan) reverted to the twin naming scheme and confusingly pinched the "*Nemesis 2*" name from the first MSX sequel, although at least it got a distinct subtitle. This time the game's five levels were all new, and it's almost as good as its predecessor, with a particularly fine scene-setting opening section. The Japanese and Western releases have different graphics for the end sequences.

PLAY IT NOW ON: Your GBA/KIGB





» Ok, we're getting seriously confused now… It's a 1987 game that was remade in 1993, so it looks like a new game and not an older one, yet we've called it *Nemesis 90*, but it's really *Nemesis 2*? Aaargggh!

1993
NEMESIS 90 KAI (TRANS: "REVISED")

Not content with mucking around with words, Konami thought it'd also be a laugh to screw with dates. This game for the Japanese Sharp X68000 computer is actually a reworking of the 1987 MSX *Nemesis 2* with much nicer graphics, a simplified weapons system, and – oh no – the already challenging difficulty cranked up several notches. Hmm… a 1987 game released in 1993? Let's split the difference and call it "*Nemesis 90*", retrospectively changing the name of the game it's based on! Genius! (Interestingly, at around the same time some fans also produced an unofficial "hack" port of *Nemesis 2* to run on the X68000. Extraordinarily professional in quality and more faithful to the MSX game, it's somewhat less daunting than the "legit" version.)

PLAY IT NOW ON: The X68000 emulator XM6

1997
GRADIUS GAIDEN (TRANS: "GRADIUS LEGENDS")

Until its welcome reappearance on the PSP's recent *Gradius Collection*, this was the lost jewel in the *Gradius* crown. Only released in Japan, it's a strikingly beautiful interpretation of some classic *Gradius* themes, with gorgeous, translucent graphics, wonderfully inventive levels (like the "Gradius junkyard" of stage 2), well-judged and much fairer difficulty, and (for the first time in the series) a two-players-at-once option. Until the arrival of *Gradius V*, this was the best of all the *Gradiuses*. Watch out for the disturbing giant-swastika boss on level 8, and curse the European and American branches of Sony for frowning on 2D releases like this until almost a decade later.

PLAY IT NOW ON: Gradius Collection (PSP)



» *Gradius Gaiden* was the first game in the series to allow two players to blast up the enemy at once. Now you had someone else to blame if you lost a life. Brilliant

1998
GRADIUS 4 FUKKATSU (TRANS: "THE REVIVAL")

After the triumph of *Gradius Gaiden*, it was all the more surprising that the bearer of the official "*Gradius IV*" moniker would be such a stinker. Despite accompanying the launch of the new flagship PS2, this is an utter catastrophe of a game, from the stupendously ugly first level all the way through the farrago of hideously unfair memory-test stages that make up the rest of it. The PSP version's quicksave function makes it almost palatable, if only to see the spanky new visual effects later on, but in the arcades and on the PS2 this was a complete atrocity.

PLAY IT NOW ON: Gradius Collection (PSP)

PARODIUS ZERO

Even though we haven't covered *Parodius* in this feature, we couldn't help but wonder where the idea for it came for when we stumbled across this. It's "*Gradius Spacial*", a 1987 fan-created mod of the first *Gradius* running on the Sharp X68000 computer, in which the layouts of the levels have been altered, and all the sprites except your ship replaced by characters from various Namco games (including *Pac-Man*, *Galaga*, *Dig-Dug* and *Xevious*). It would be three more years before Konami came up with the idea of a "parody *Gradius*" itself.



» In a perfect world we'd have erased *Gradius 4* from history, but then this wouldn't be the definitive *Gradius* article. God damn our perfection, god damn it to hell

2001
GRADIUS GENERATION AKA GRADIUS GALAXIES AKA GRADIUS ADVANCE

Fortunately, the escaped mental patients who'd broken into Konami HQ and written *Gradius IV* were recaptured by burly men with butterfly nets, and things got back on track with the thrice-named GBA game. In many ways reminiscent of *Gaiden* (especially visually), and also taking the first player-friendly steps towards the "quicksave" function of the PSP compilation, *Generation* nevertheless dodges any accusations of being over-easy with the inclusion of three insanely brutal Challenge Modes, which pit the player against short sections of the game without power-ups and facing viciously enhanced enemies. The third and final one will make you yearn for the good old days of *Nemesis 3*.

PLAY IT NOW ON: Your GBA/DS



» If you thought other *Gradius* games were tough wait until you discover *Generation's* Challenge Modes… You won't know what hit you



» *Gradius* on a mobile phone? You better believe it. You can't consider yourself a true *Gradius* fan until you own both of them

2004
GRADIUS V

And finally, for now, we come to what by any logical reckoning is actually the 15th, rather than 5th, completely distinct classic-style *Gradius*/*Nemesis* game. (See "BYE BYE BLACK SHEEP", though.) After the disaster that was *Gradius IV*, Konami handed over control of the series' second PS2 incarnation to *Treasure*, the celebrated developer famed for, among many other things, the legendary shoot-'em-ups *Radiant Silvergun* and *Ikaruga*. The former Konami employees didn't disappoint, taking the signature elements of *Gradius* but also implementing some dramatic changes – most crucially the ability to retrieve your "Option" ghost ships when you died – to create what for all sane people is the pinnacle of the horizontally-scrolling shooter's art. Visually stunning and punishingly hard, yet in a vastly more fair and accessible way than any other game in the line, *Gradius V* is a masterpiece. It's so hard to imagine it being bettered, in fact, that if there's any honour left in the world of videogaming publishing, Konami will take a leaf out of Irem's book and, as with *R-Type Final*, allow it to stand as the end marker of a series that's now been running for almost a quarter of a century. You just can't follow perfection.

PLAY IT NOW ON: The PS2, duh

2004
GRADIUS NEO
GRADIUS NEO IMPERIAL

For hardcore *Gradius* collectors, these two games are the Holy Grail and the lost treasures of Atlantis combined. Released only in Japan, they're two all-new and original *Gradius* titles which run exclusively on mobile phones. *Neo* is a fairly traditional five-stage *Gradius*, most interesting for including some weapons from the *Parodius* spin-off series. *Neo Imperial*, however, is a radical departure in which you play the part of one of the evil Bacterion boss ships (the one from the end of the original coin-op's first level), and fly in the opposite direction to the norm, from the right-hand-side of the screen to the left. You'll have to jump through some very convoluted hoops if you want to sample the joys of either of these in the West, so good luck with that.

PLAY IT NOW ON: Your flight back from Tokyo

» The finest game in the *Gradius* cannon and the greatest horizontal shooter ever made bar none. Don't take our word for it though, play it for yourself and weep at Treasure's brilliance



BYE BYE BLACK SHEEP

Particularly alert readers will have noticed some obvious omissions from this so-called, self-styled "definitive" guide to the *Gradius* family – most notably the *Salamander* and *Parodius* series. There are all sorts of plausible reasons for this, not least that if we were to cover every *Gradius-related* thing out there we'd need most of the issue, but mostly it's that these games, like mutated genetic cousins, don't really belong.

- The three *Salamander* games, while officially part of the *Gradius* canon, are actually quite different in several crucial respects, such as the inclusion of vertically-scrolling levels and the instant-effect nature of the power-ups (except in the case of *Life Force*, the weird variant of *Salamander*, and frankly the *Gradius* backstory is already confusing enough without getting into *that*).

- The four *Parodius* titles, on the other hand, do play more or less identically to the *Gradius* games, but clearly aren't a part of the same plotline, any more than *Airplane!* is part of the *Airport 7X* series of films that it spoofed.

- The two *Solar Assault* coin-ops just borrow the name and slap a layer of *Gradius*-themed paint onto two games from a totally different genre, the *Starblade*-style first-person 3D space shooter.

- You could, of course, argue that the LCD handheld *Gradius* game, and the Japanese board game, and so on, also counted as "*Gradius* games" and ought to be included. We would fix you with a special hard stare, though, and you'd definitely back down.

- And we're only really interested in completely different games in the series, so except where already noted (if it was particularly interesting or significant) we're not concerning ourselves here with things like changes in home conversions (missing levels, numbers of Options, altered weapons), or oddities like the "*VS*" coin-op release of *Gradius*, running on NES hardware but looking quite different to the ordinary NES version. There's a particularly interesting tale surrounding the Spectrum release, for example (differently titled "*Nemesis: The Final Challenge*"), but that'll just have to wait for another day, because – look! – we've already run out of space for. Bye!



THE MAKING OF...

DRAGON'S LAIR

In a time when arcade games hosted basic graphics, there was one game that changed peoples' perspectives of games indefinitely. That game was Dragon's Lair, the first of its kind to feature movie quality visuals and interactive gameplay. Kim Wild talks to Gary Goldman about this laser disc classic.



For those unfamiliar with *Dragon's Lair,* the game starred, Dirk the Daring, a bumbling oaf who has to enter a booby-trapped castle to rescue his girlfriend from a ferocious dragon. Unlike other arcade games of its time, or indeed our time, *Dragon's Lair* was more like an interactive movie, where the player would direct the main character in a series of sequences, than a platformer where you'd assume complete control. The outcome of each cartoon scene is determined by entering the right move at each decision point; make the wrong decision and you'll face immediate death.

The original concept came from Rick Dyer of Advanced Microcomputer Systems (AMS). The company had been working on a fantasy game for two years but wanted to make a more visual masterpiece. After methods of animation including slideshows and a tape deck, cash till roll and giant rolodex failed to re-create a hand drawn style, Rick Dyer began to look elsewhere. He discovered laser disc: a brand new optical storage

"WE CHANGED THE CONTINUITY OF GAME-PLAY, WHICH UPSET THE WRITERS AND STORYBOARD ARTISTS OVER AT RICK'S SHOP"

medium that had the ability to replicate movie quality animation. Disc access was random and chapter-based so it allowed almost instant access to any area of the disc. One visit to the cinema later, and the idea for a partnership formed. Gary Goldman, a member of the production team for Don Bluth, recalls how this came about. "He [Dyer] had seen The Secret of NIMH in the theatre with his wife, Jan, and decided then that we should be the team to do the animation. He had already put a team of writers and artists together to write a game script and to storyboard the game in sequences. His plan was for a three-way partnership, with his team doing pre-production and the computer programming, Bluth Group was to do the actual production and Cinematronics to do the distribution."

However there were a few problems – namely a question of financing. "Each partner-company was to finance its own part of the deal," explains Goldman. "The problem for us was that we didn't have any capital. Our studio operations had just been interrupted by the Screen Cartoonists union strike, and our backers pulled out, leaving us with no cash flow. So we had to borrow cash to get involved, from friends, relatives, whoever we could convince that this was a solid idea. At one point we even borrowed from Rick Dyer's and Jim Pearce's companies."

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Once financial issues had been resolved, it was time to make a start on development. Although Rick Dyer's team had designed their own characters and storyboards, many of these had to be discarded, as they didn't meet the required standards. In the end, character design and animation was left entirely to Don Bluth's production team while Dyer and his loyal designers kept working on ideas and programming the links between each scene. "We changed the continuity of gameplay, which upset the writers and storyboard artists over at Rick's shop," recalls Goldman "We basically re-storyboarded the game with new designs and sometimes completely different ideas. At the time Rick was very good about keeping his crew's objections from us, letting us plod on."

Daphne and Dirk also saw an overhaul. Dirk was remodelled as "a clumsy oaf, big feet and hands and not too smart" while Don Bluth spent considerable time drawing Daphne in various seductive poses, inspired by Gary Goldman's old collection of Playboy magazines. It's a fact Goldman recalls vividly. "It was odd walking by Don's office with him in there at the drawing board surrounded by several, open, Playboy magazines. In the end, Don put Daphne in a very revealing one-piece "thong" swimsuit with a sheer veil that partially covered her." Don Bluth was also responsible for designing the 50 different humorous ways in which Dirk could die including being eaten, squashed and disintegrated.

The script was another area that was largely affected by Don Bluth's team. As Dirk was the main character and dialogue might prove to cause difficulties with foreign language translation, it was scrapped in favour of grunts, groans and screams. Due to lack of funds, all voice acting was dealt with in-house with editor Dan Molina providing Dirk's expressions. Daphne however has to speak as she dispenses crucial information at the big finale featuring the fight with Singe the dragon. Stepping up to the role of air-head Daphne was Key Clean-up Supervisor, Vera Lanpher.



ENTERING A 3D WORLD

In 2002, Rick Dyer, Gary Goldman and Don Bluth collaborated on a sequel to the franchise and concocted *Dragon's Lair 3D*. Released on PC, Xbox and GameCube, *Dragon's Lair 3D* saw Dirk enter a trap-infested castle to rescue the beautiful Daphne. Sadly, the game was missing many of its trademark death sequences, something that Goldman does regret. "We were disappointed that some of the humorous death situations could not be incorporated. We had many discussions about it and it was going to delay production and send costs through the roof." The game was condemned by the specialist press but still seemed to garner a following. "We have had a ton of fan mail that contradicts the critics' opinions," recalls Goldman. "But then, those that wrote in are probably die-hard *Dragon's Lair* fans. And, they were thrilled to see a revived Dirk in 3D."



» *Dragon's Lair 3D* boasted the same traditional animation of the original but with more freedom to move

IN THE KNOW



- » **PUBLISHER:** CINEMATRONICS (US) ATARI (EUROPE)
- » **DEVELOPER:** AMS
- » **RELEASED:** 1983
- » **GENRE:** ARCADE GAME
- » **EXPECT TO PAY:** £500+



THE MAKING OF... DRAGONS LAIR



"IT WAS ODD WALKING BY DON'S OFFICE WITH HIM IN THERE AT THE DRAWING BOARD SURROUNDED BY SEVERAL, OPEN, PLAYBOY MAGAZINES"



» *Dragon's Lair* was hyped to be the future of the Arcade game industry but sadly this wasn't to be



...Thanks to Classical Animation and Laser Disc Technology

» 22 minutes of footage featured in the game all created with classical animation

THE FINAL PRODUCT

With AMS aiming to have the first laser-disc title in arcades, work on *Dragon's Lair* had to be swift. After initial development in October 1982, animation was started in January 1983, while Rick's team managed to compile three colour sequences by March for the Chicago Game Show. Around 130 artists and technicians were involved in development and the final product was finished in June, ready to ship to arcades in July.

In Europe, *Dragon's Lair* was licensed to Atari for production and manufacturing and the cabinet design differed to the American edition.

AMS field-tested the game at the Malibu Grand Prix El Monte, California and were staggered by the impact. Over 200 people were watching in amazement at the game's animation and the same thing was occurring at Cinematronics' own test in San Diego.

Its success in arcades was unprecedented, helped further by the cheaper price set by Cinematronics of 50 cents. As laser disc was an expensive technology in those days (the player alone was $1,000) the lower price gave the incentive for arcade owners to stock the machine. The immense popularity of the game meant many recouped the cost within a week. "When you went to an arcade, there was always a crowd around the *Dragon's Lair* machine and a line of people waiting to play the game. Many of the arcades placed extra monitors on top of the game cabinet so the crowd could see the animation."

Almost overnight, *Dragon's Lair* became a phenomenon leading to merchandise such as lunch boxes, underwear, stickers and board games, with even a cartoon series launching in 1984. Inevitably, the game was ported



» A still cell of Dirk the Daring ready to confront the enemy



» A selection of drawings depicting Dirk's foe, the evil dragon Singe in a variety of poses

to over 18 computer formats although none of those had any input from either company barring artwork.

Such success naturally meant a sequel, so a follow-up, *Space Ace*, released in 1984, was born although *Dragon's Lair* devotees would have to wait until 1991 to see *Dragon's Lair II* hit the arcades. Scenes that were left out of *Dragon's Lair II: Time Warp* would eventually see an appearance in *Dragon's Lair III* on PC. However, the popularity of laser-disc games trailed off and the sequels failed to capitalise on the original's success. Laser-disc players were notoriously unreliable, frequently breaking and some of the parts had been discontinued, making them difficult to repair.

The limited nature of the gameplay also meant that the novelty of astounding visuals soon wore off. Goldman suggests why the sequels lacked the same impact on the market. "*Dragon's Lair* was a 'first', a breakthrough on the imagery for arcade games. Even though *Space Ace* was faster paced and had more spectacular imagery, the audiences had seen the first and were thrilled by it. Also, the arcade industry was in decline – *Dragon's Lair* sparked a momentary positive blip on the [business] screen, but didn't sustain it. With a declining attendance at the arcades, owners were avoiding financial risk; these arcade games were more expensive and not as many *Space Ace* machines were purchased by arcade owners. With regard to *Dragon's Lair II*, production was actually stopped in March of 1984 with it 100 per cent animated but only about 75 per cent in



» Riding this mechanical horse was just one of the many exhilarating moments from Dragon's Lair. Giddy up!



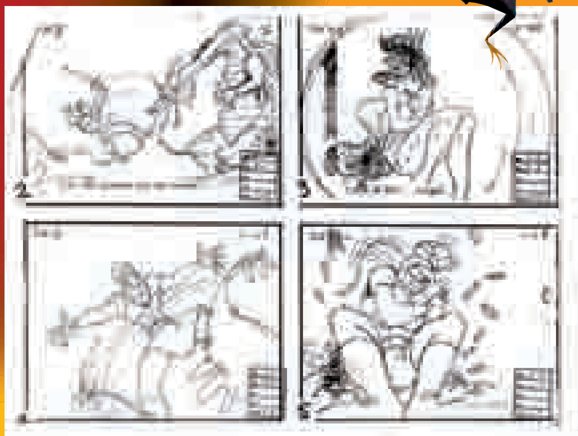
» Dirk got himself into all sorts of difficult situations - death usually followed…

DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

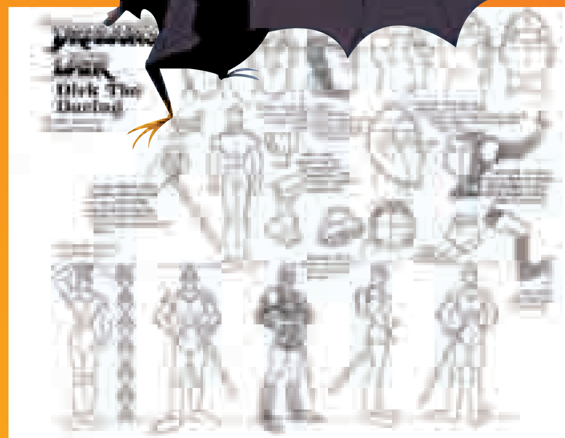
TIME TRAVELLER
SYSTEMS: ARCADE, DVD
YEAR: 1991

THAYER'S QUEST
SYSTEMS: ARCADE, DVD
YEAR: 1984





» A storyboard planned out depicting Dirk trying to save Daphne from Singe the Dragon



» Detailed drawings and descriptions were created months before animation proceeded

colour. The arcade industry was going down and Cinematronics would not complete the game. The game would not be completed until 1989, financed by Leland Corporation, a company that bought out Cinematronics."

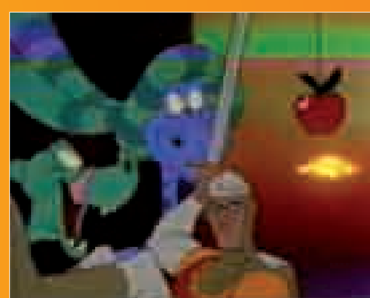
THE LEGEND LIVES ON

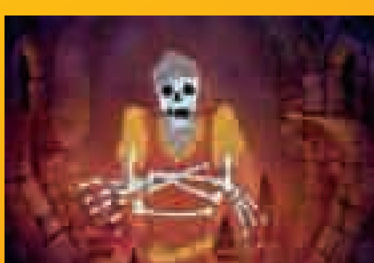
Although the arcade game exists solely in the hands of devout collectors, the legacy of *Dragon's Lair* lives on. The *Dragon's Lair* Project is the largest resource dedicated to laser-disc based games and is the first port of call for anyone seeking out original versions of *Dragon's Lair.* The DAPHNE emulator is also available so fans and retro gamers can once again experience the thrills of the original all over again.

Companies like Digital Leisure (http://www.digitalleisure.com) have made it their quest to bring *Dragon's Lair* to as many platforms as possible, 20 years after the release of the original. Digital Leisure first acquired the rights to *Dragon's Lair, Space Ace* and *Dragon's Lair II: Time Warp* in early 1997 and then went on to completely re-write the code to accurately copy the original arcade version. To squeeze such information onto a DVD however, requires some work as Paul Gold explains. "To port the classic laser-disc games to DVD and the compatible formats requires some serious finesse. Using a DVD authoring system like the ones a Hollywood studio would use to create DVDs for their movie releases, we are able to recreate the classic arcade experience."

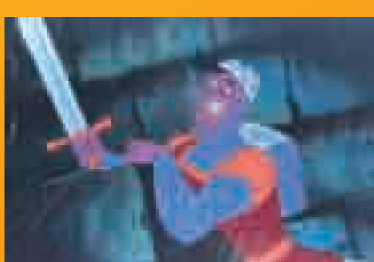
Any regrets? Gary Goldman only has a few. "One thing is that there was a plan for, Chris Stone, the composer of the *Dragon's Lair* music to go to London to use a 40-piece orchestra to record the musical underscore for *Dragon's Lair II.* I wish we could've done it that way. Also, we have a script for a feature film of *Dragon's Lair.* I regret that we haven't been able to get the movie into production – and there are a lot of fans out there waiting for it. We've had some great meetings with the major studios. They know the title and like the script but no one has actually said yes. Think good thoughts. It may just happen."

"AROUND 130 ARTISTS AND TECHNICIANS WERE INVOLVED IN DEVELOPMENT AND THE FINAL PRODUCT WAS FINISHED IN JUNE"





» The death screen will be familiar to those not quick enough to dodge traps on screen



» The amusing death sequences kept players purposefully dying just to see the next animation.

OTHER GAMES IN THE SERIES:

Other Games in the Series: Dragon's Lair
Dragon's Lair II: Timewarp
Dragon's Lair III: Curse Of Mordread
Dragon's Lair 3D
Space Ace

Thanks to Jeff Kinder from The Dragon's Lair Project (http://www.dragons-lair-project.com/) for the interview and providing artwork and images for this article.
Credit goes to Jason Finn for offering additional information and images.
Thanks to Paul Gold of Digital Leisure for answering our questions.
Also thanks to Gary Goldman for taking the time out to be interviewed.

INTERVIEW WITH JEFF KINDER

Jeff is responsible for the Dragon's Lair Project. Retro Gamer asked some questions.

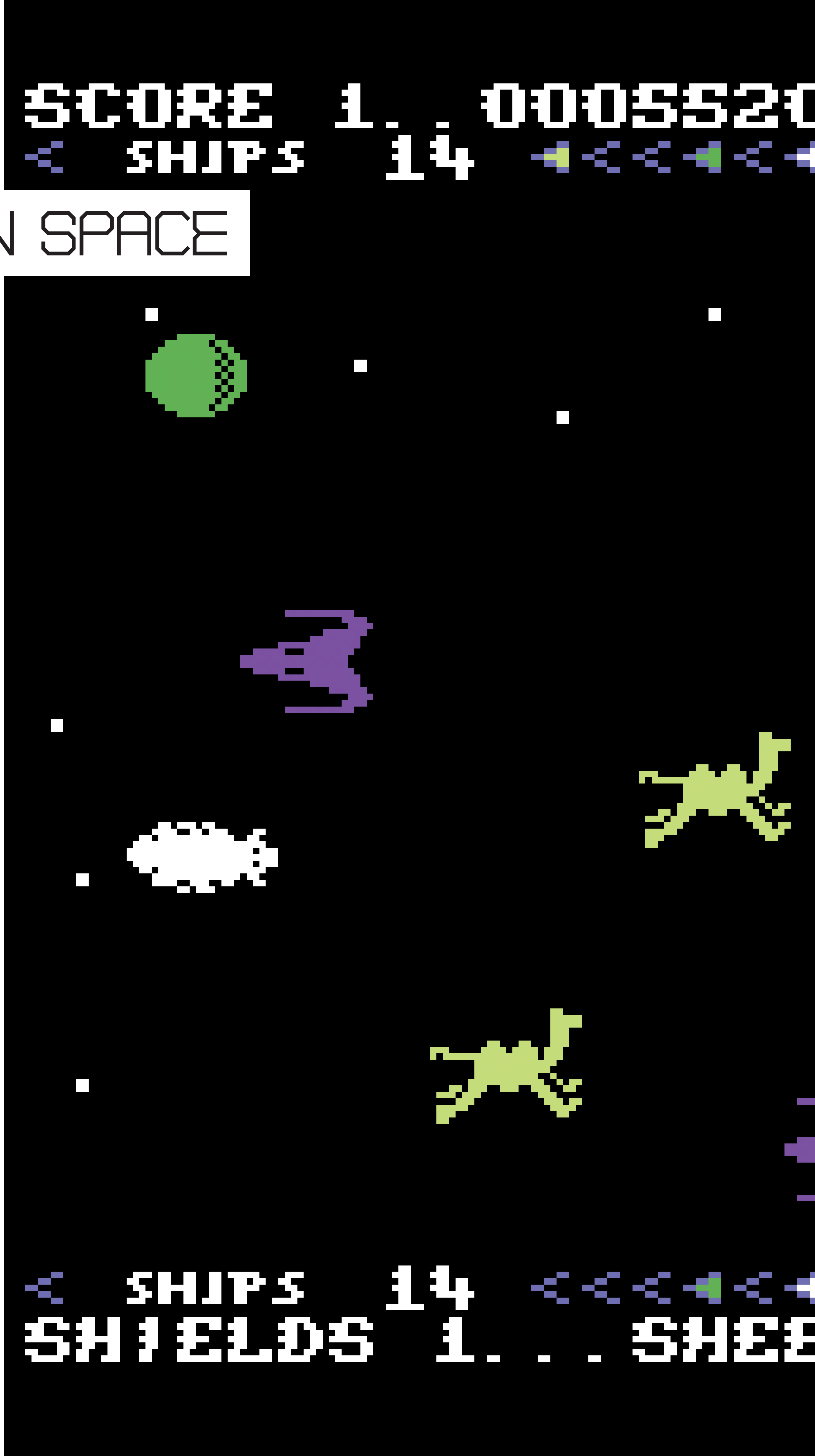
Retro Gamer: When did you set up the *Dragon's Lair* Project?
Jeff Kinder: The site went online on August 25, 1997. It had three pages: my story of how I restored my *Dragon's Lair* machine, History of *Dragon's Lair, Space Ace,* and Thayer's Quest page, and an online version of the *Dragon's Lair* owner's manual. Today there are 900+ pages and the site has received near three million hits.

RG: What is it about *Dragon's Lair* and the sequels that are so appealing?
JK: Originally, it was the graphics/animation. Back in 1983 arcade game graphics were not what they are today. When *Dragon's Lair* came out, it was so different from anything ever seen before.

RG: Have you ever met the creators?
JK: Yes, I've met all four: Don Bluth, Gary Goldman, Rick Dyer, and John Pomeroy. They are really nice guys and they appreciate what Dave Hallock and I have done with the site to keep the memory of *Dragon's Lair* alive.

RG: How can readers of Retro Gamer contribute?
JK: We are always looking for more information to add to the website to help keep the games remembered for a long time to come.





SHEEP IN SPACE

SHEEP MAY SAFELY GRAZE



- **PUBLISHER** LLAMASOFT
- **RELEASED:** 1984
- **GENRE:** SHOOT-'EM-UP
- **FEATURED HARDWARE:** COMMODORE 64
- **EXPECT TO PAY:** £5



HISTORY

Every morning I thank Jeff for Flossie. A tuft of wool from the ovine heroine of Llamasoft's homage to *Defender* is mounted, signed, (by Jeff Minter, not the sheep), framed and hangs just above the bog. Lest we forget.

And many have forgotten *Sheep In Space*. Minter himself has inexplicably left it off the softography on his website, but then 1984 was a prolific year for him, with *Ancipital*, *Hellgate* and *Revenge Of The Mutant Camels* making it an annus mirabilis.

Sheep In Space is the subtlest of the four. Initially, it appears to be a standard horizontal scrolling shooter, populated by Minter's usual menagerie of surreal foes. Each level begins with a frantic blast as spacecrafts, camels or third-eye pyramids swarm toward your Sheepoid, but this gives way to a focused pursuit of stray robot drones intent on blowing up the planets that frame the playfield above and below. Now the clever touches are revealed. The 'Bonios of Doom' you spit forth as a weapon are affected by gravity, and destroying an escaping enemy with a gracefully curved shot just before it unloads a charge to one of the Planet Busters is a thing of beauty.

The roles are poignantly reversed as you land on a patch of pasture to graze and refuel, watching your stomach go from 'Famished' to 'Replete', as your adversaries hover ominously in waiting. Your eyes are constantly scanning the screen to check on the state of your shields, the proximity of hostile aliens and how close the twin worlds are to exploding and hurling you into a hellish hyperspace.

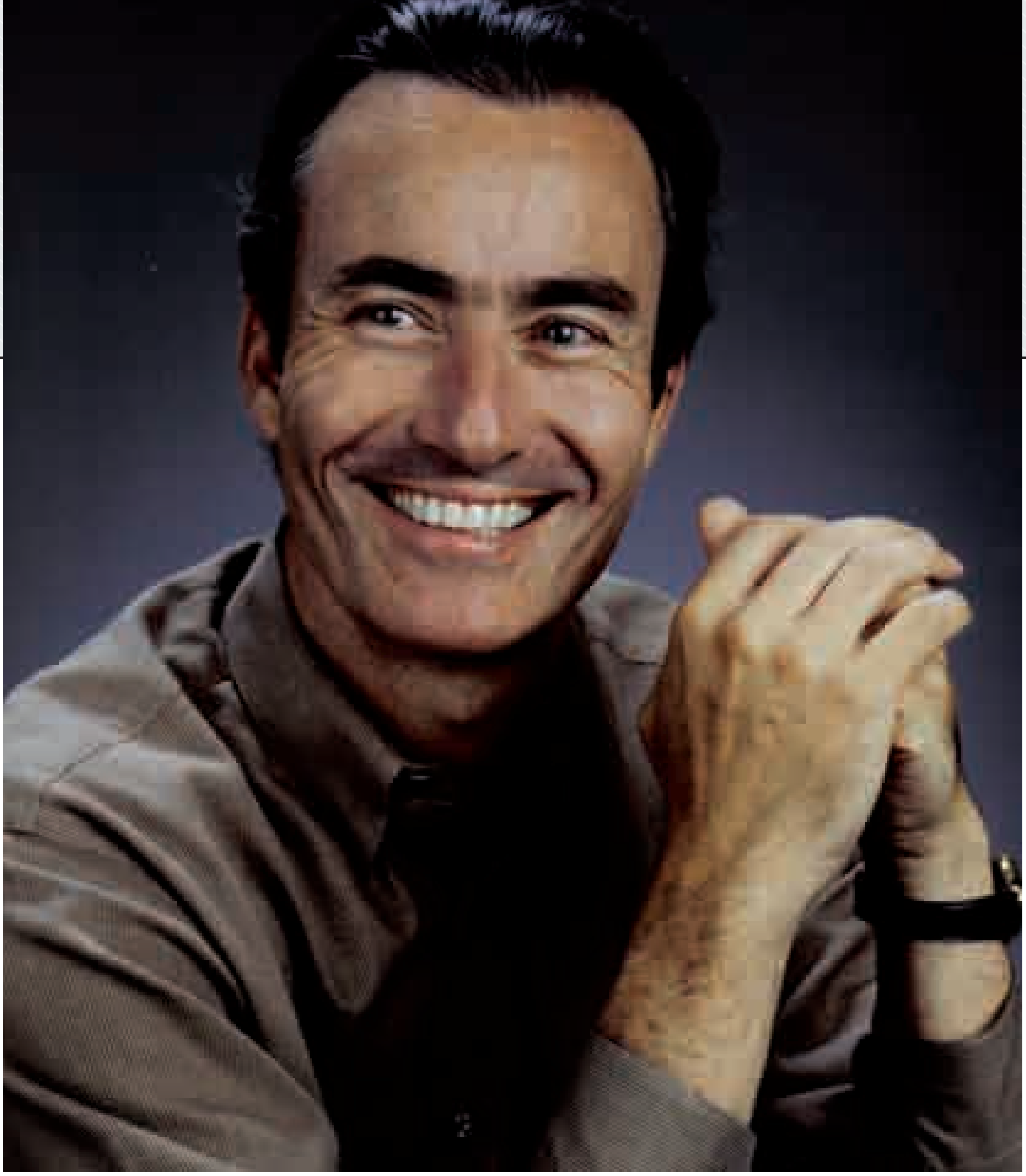
It's the yo-yoing tension between calm and chaos, being the hunter and the hunted that makes *Sheep In Space* such a compelling experience. My childhood friend Pete travels from Australia each Christmas for a two-player game, such is its allure…

Flossie passed away in 2003 and the outpouring of love and sympathy on the YakYak forums was tangible. This is a fitting epitaph to, as Jeff put it, 'the prettiest sheep in the world'.


SCORE 2.
PROXIM
CHARGES
PROXIM
CHARGES
3...
STOMACH RUMBLING

In the chair with...

PART MAN, PART INFLUENTIAL INDUSTRY LEGEND, THE EVER ENIGMATIC TRIP HAWKINS HAS UNDOUBTEDLY IN SOME WAY TOUCHED EVERY GAMER ALIVE. AFTER ALL, HE IS THE FOUNDER OF ELECTRONIC ARTS. WISHING TO FIND OUT JUST HOW FAR-REACHING HIS VENTURES HAVE BEEN, JOHN SZCZEPANIAK CORNERS TRIP AND ASKS SOME PERTINENT QUESTIONS.



WILLIAM "TRIP" M HAWKINS III

Trip Hawkins is an excellent speaker with an ability to engage those listening, be they games journalists, an auditorium of industry veterans, or fellow colleagues. It would be easy to be swept along with the anecdotes when asking questions, so I duly make sure to cover the most important topic first: why the name Trip? "I'm actually William M Hawkins III. When I was a few days old, my grandfather suggested the nickname 'Trippy' because I was a triplicate. It got shortened to 'Trip' when I was about ten."

Born in 1953, Trip thought about games from an early age, and by 1971 had already considered combining them with computers and TVs. He was just 17-years-old. "Before that, I had already designed some board and card games after becoming a serious gamer as a pre-teen. As a teenager I was a fan of deeper games like those from Strat-O-Matic and Avalon Hill Games. These provided great fantasies, but were not easy enough to engage mass consumers. They all required the players to manage the 'machinery' of the game that provided the realism. That was complicated and too much like work for most people."

He noticed that his friends enjoyed watching TV, but had less interest in games; it was the opposite for Trip. The 'eureka' moment regarding computers came about unexpectedly; when he was 17, a friend of his father's showed him a home-built DEC PDP-8 computer, and with it a simple text adventure that printed out on a KSR33 teletype terminal: "The kind that had the yellow scroll of paper. I instantly made the connection that more people would want to play games if the 'machinery' was done inside the box, and if the action was portrayed on a TV screen." This little encounter would go on to profoundly affect the course of videogaming.

A year later, in the fall of 1972, Trip attended Harvard University and within a year was taking his first computer course that gave access to a PDP-11. Already having a love for sports simulations, one of the very first things done in his spare time was an American Football game. Which, purely for the benefit of our American readers, "could pre-play the Super Bowl that followed the 1973 NFL season". He certainly knew what he was doing; rather eerily the final result was very close to real life. "[When] I played the final simulation, Miami beat Minnesota, 23-6. Then the real Super Bowl took place and Miami won 24-7. This simulation was a precursor to *Madden Football* in some ways."

What Trip reveals next is startling and shows what a tenacious businessman he was at an early age. He speaks of how much he learnt about computers while at university, and also two summer jobs at a software company that dealt with big systems like, "satellite weather data control", for the government. It is here that he began to formulate a plan for the most successful publisher ever: "It was at this summer job in 1975 that I first determined that I would start EA in 1982. Yes, that's right, I planned it specifically seven years in advance!"

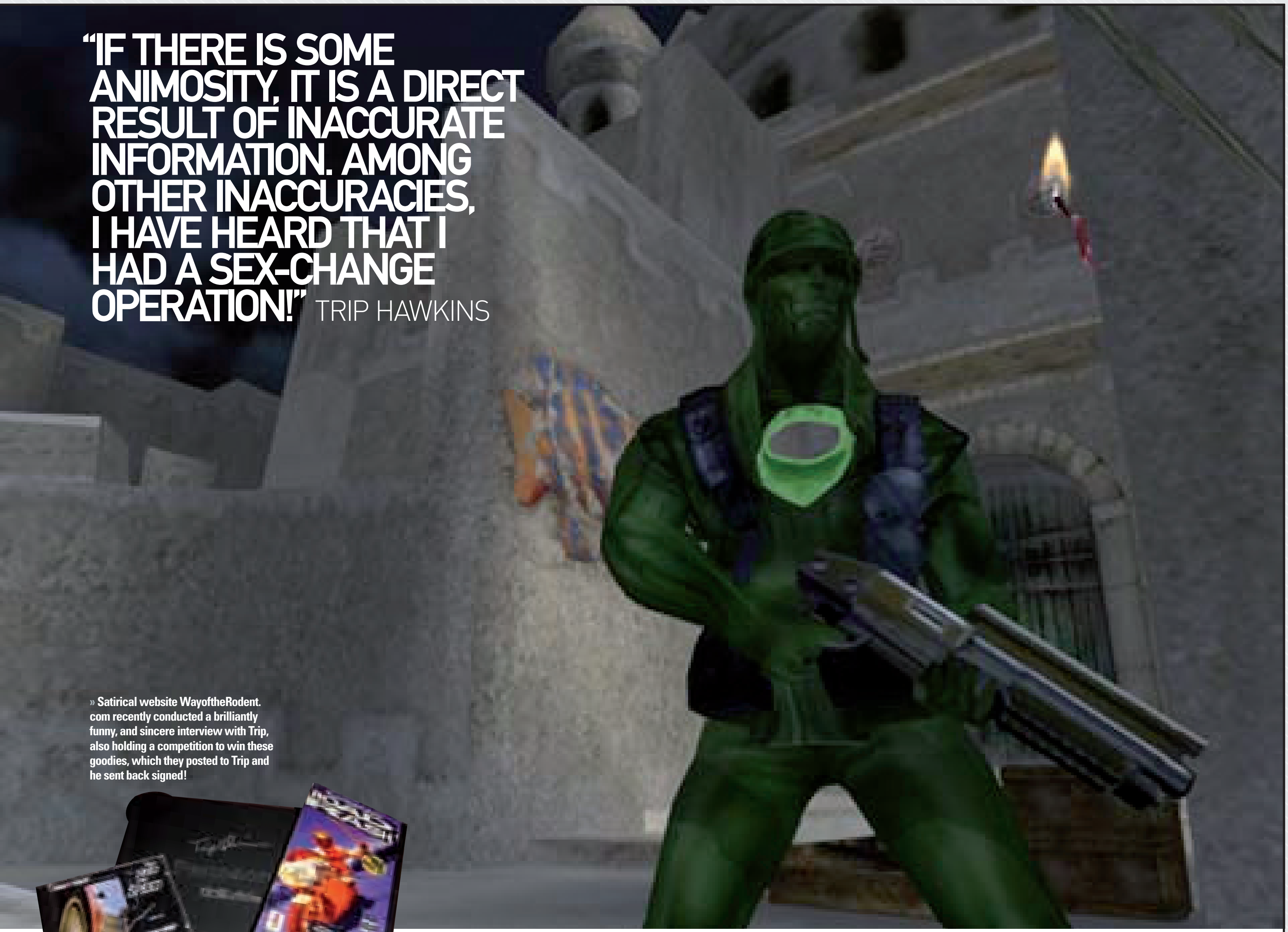
IN THE KNOW

IN BRIEF...

Named Trip by his Grandad – because of the III (Triple) – Trip, in 1975, planned to start EA in 1982, specifically seven years in advance, following completion of a degree in Strategy and Applied Game Theory from Harvard. EA, intially named Amazin' Software, began as a well-respected company placing great importance on its developers. In 1990 Trip launched the 3DO system, which eventually led to his split from EA, something he admits was a mistake financially. He is currently head of Digital Chocolate, developing original games for mobiles.

» Don't worry about me, Sarge, it's just a plastic wound!" Admit it, you chuckled at that in-game joke just like the rest of our office

"IF THERE IS SOME ANIMOSITY, IT IS A DIRECT RESULT OF INACCURATE INFORMATION. AMONG OTHER INACCURACIES, I HAVE HEARD THAT I HAD A SEX-CHANGE OPERATION!" TRIP HAWKINS



» Satirical website WayoftheRodent.com recently conducted a brilliantly funny, and sincere interview with Trip, also holding a competition to win these goodies, which they posted to Trip and he sent back signed!





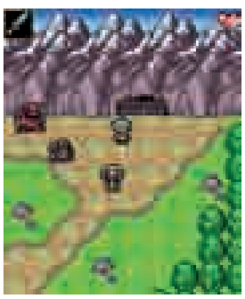
» Two much-loved games for the 3DO, *Road Rash* and *Need For Speed*. The latter went on to become one of EA's biggest franchises

In the chair with...

WILLIAM "TRIP" M HAWKINS III

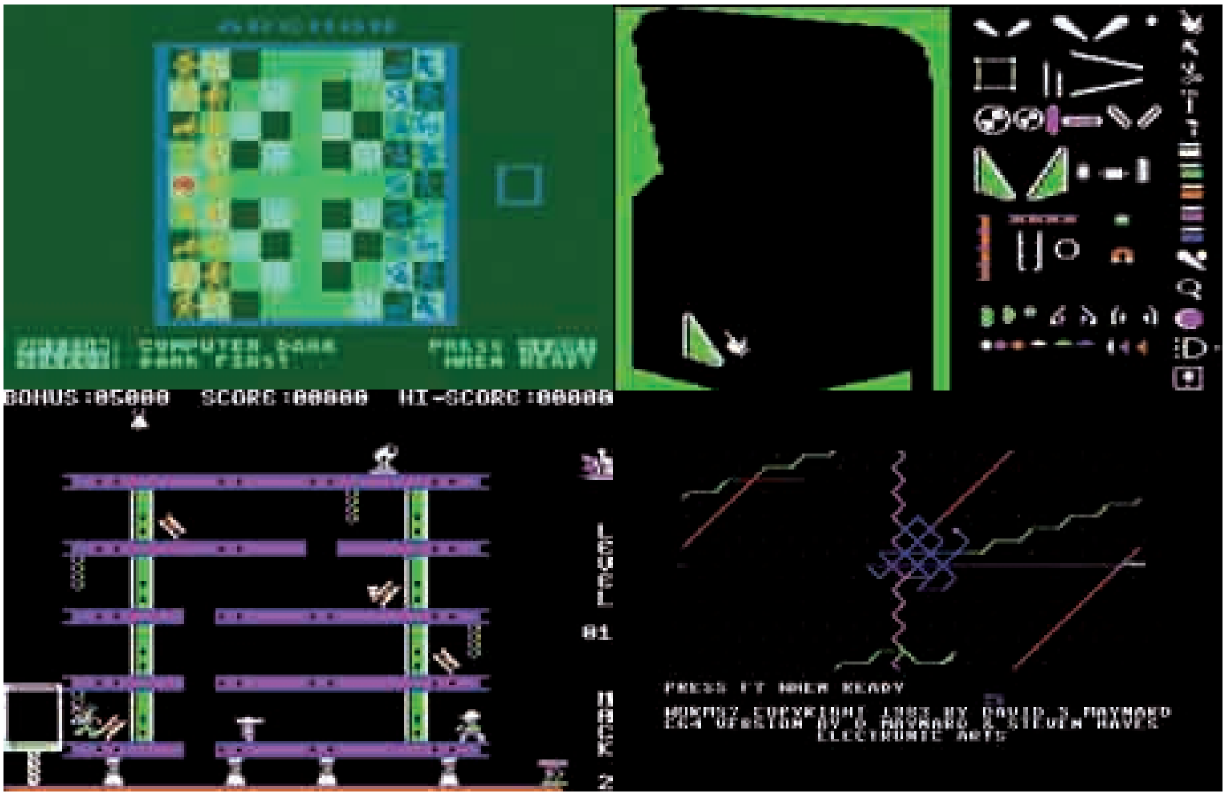
Box Of Chocs, Sir?

Trip Hawkins is achieving success with a new company. We asked him about it. "Digital Chocolate has rapidly emerged as the most innovative and original among the independent mobile game publishers. Our games have the number one highest quality ratings from the independent critics. *WordKing Poker* was just chosen by Nokia as its game of the year. *Mobile League Sports Network (MLSN) Sports Picks* was named the Innovative Game Of The Year by IGN, and *Tower Bloxx* also won a Game Of The Year award. While most competitors are relying on derivatives and licences, we're trying to make mobile a first-rate platform by originating ideas that take full advantage of the mobile lifestyle. While the desktop was won by the PC, I believe the social era will be won by the mobile phone, in part because of the social value of many of our applications, such as *MLSN*." He also added that he takes a hands-on approach and is still closely involved, contributing many ideas and refinements.



» Mobile, but still great to play

» **Four of the very first titles that Trip published under Electronic Arts (clockwise from top left): *Archon, Pinball Construction Set, Worms!* and *Hard Hat Mack***



I jest that, with such drive and ambition, his competitors must have been terrified, since there have been many detractors over the years. But he looks me directly in the eyes, speaking candidly on the subject, obviously well-versed in this area. "Historically, my biggest critics have been competitors that lost something where EA became successful. A lot of entrepreneurs have big egos, and many are insecure. They find it easier to placate themselves if they decide there is something wrong with me, when maybe it was something they did wrong. I think when others are criticising me, it has less to do with me and more to do with what they are not willing to confront about themselves. A lot of people want to find something wrong with people that stand out, and they spin what they want to believe. People that know me see the good qualities. Some people that do not know me are perhaps [those] who just like to take the negative side of an argument. If there is some animosity, it is a direct result of jealousy or ignorance, or is just inaccurate information. Among other inaccuracies, I have heard that I had a sex-change operation!" Well, Retro Gamer can now put an end to that myth!

While at Harvard, things moved quickly for the young entrepreneurial Hawkins. He recalls how he became proficient in ten different programming languages, and developed some very interesting simulations as part of a customised university major that he himself devised and convinced Harvard's administration to accept. It was named 'Strategy and Applied Game Theory'. Later he won grant awards from the Kennedy School of Government for a simulation of nuclear war, which was even mentioned at the annual Stockholm International Peace Research Institute conference.



» Retro Gamer prides itself on finding the oldest photos possible for everyone we interview. This one was taken from *Amiga World* magazine

In 1973 Hawkins started his first games company. And his goal for this fledgling start-up? "To make a table-top football game. [But] I ran out of money because I'd only started with a loan from my dad for $5,000. I concluded that I needed to know more about business before starting another company, so I decided to get an MBA." This brought Trip to Stanford University, where he discovered the joys of Silicon Valley and attended the first of the legendary West Coast Computer Fairs where the Apple II debuted. He learned enough about Apple to conclude that he should work there – as he puts it, "In order to complete my business education and to help build an installed hardware base in the home, that would help me get EA started."

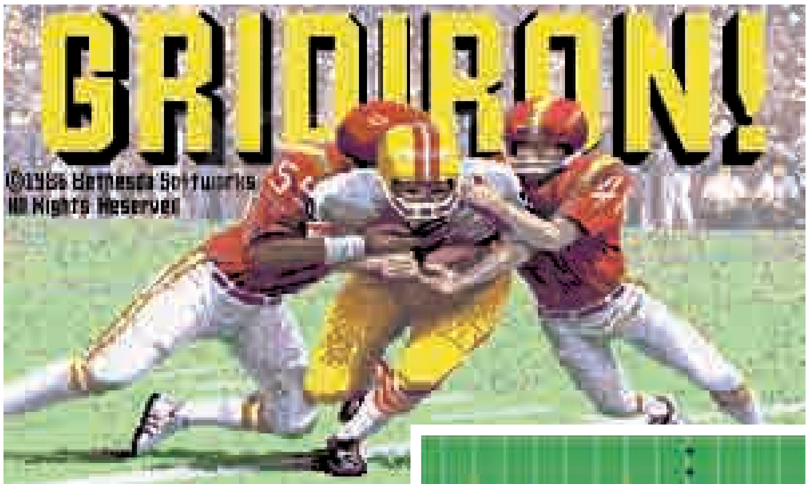
RADIO, VIDEO, 3DO

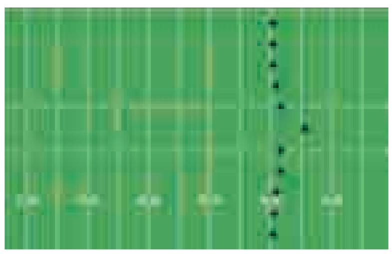


While at EA, Trip decided to enter the hardware market. He explains, "I looked ahead and worried that the draconian console licences were going to combine with cartridge media and a lack of hardware innovation to stultify the industry. I thought I should try to do something active about it, which resulted in the creation of 3DO."

Despite unfair criticism, the system had genuine merit and featured great innovations, like the interlinking daisy-chain controllers. Commendable in the extreme, 3DO also had no territory lock-out between countries. A pity 3DO didn't succeed, as these would have set valuable precedents. Trip explains dryly, "This was based on what we thought was the right thing for the world and for the public. It shows you how far you go in the real world with such idealism."

In 1996, the company abandoned the hardware market to focus on software publishing. In 2003, due to mounting difficulties, 3DO closed its doors – for good.





» Did Bethesda Softworks' *Gridiron!* really play a role in the development of *Madden Football*? According to Trip, the allegations were baseless

"MY REFERENCE POINTS FOR EA WERE HOLLYWOOD AND THE RECORD BUSINESS. I WANTED TO TREAT DEVELOPERS AS ARTISTS"

TRIP HAWKINS

In 1978 he joined Apple, got his first computer, programmed some games on it but, more importantly, also began developing contacts within the industry. The following year he spent time working with Apple's engineers, coming to regard them more as artists, which would later prove highly influential. In 1980 he became one of the founding board members of Strategic Simulations Inc. Later he was also involved in Apple's marketing shift: selling directly to retailers instead of through distributors. In 1982, a mere four years after he joined, Trip stepped down from his position as Product Marketing Director at Apple. "All together, I spent more than a decade developing the foundational ideas that became the basis for Electronic Arts. I had a lot of fun and learned a lot at Apple, but by 1982 it was time to start EA."

EA, THE BEGINNING

Electronic Arts was originally started in 1982, under 'Amazin' Software'. Trip spoke with Don Valentine of Sequoia Capital, who invited him to share office space while his new company stabilised. Several months later, $2 million worth of venture capital funding was secured from Sequoia Capital and various others.

There are countless sources that provide incredibly lengthy, statistic-heavy, and mostly boring accounts of EA's business in its nascent days. Trip himself even jokes that detailing it all would probably require an entire book. So, skipping the financial politics of American business etiquette in the decadent Eighties, the key point to realise about Electronic Arts is that when Trip was at the helm, it had a heartfelt passion for videogames and those who made them. This ethos worked alongside – instead of against – a strong business plan. As such, it was publicly perceived very differently to how it is today. This may surprise our younger readers, considering how many people today regard EA as a bloated purveyor of safe-bet mediocrity, but there was a time when the name EA implied quality, excellence and, above all, originality in videogames. The evidence is in the name.

The founding employees (there were around a dozen) at Amazin' Software disliked the company title, and so dedicated an entire day to changing it. Various new names



» The young William Hawkins probably first tried a PDP8 similar to this one, available as a desktop model as early as 1968

HIGHLIGHTS

TRIP'S TOP TIPS



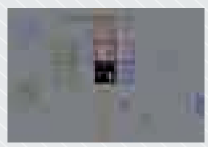
» An early Electronic Arts poster, highlighting Trip's drive to give full credit to the 'artists' behind the games, and also imbue proceedings with a rock star atmosphere

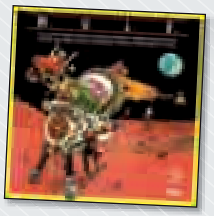
Name: Electronic Arts
Year: 1982



The first major company Trip founded brought us such classics as *M.U.L.E.* and *Populous*. After Trip left, the company grew and became very different. Today EA is a marketing colossus that dominates the videogame world. "I know it's not, ultimately, a popularity contest. I knew [early on] that I could make a big difference in the working world, if given the opportunity. I have been fortunate and blessed by opportunity, but as they say, 'the harder I work the luckier I get'."

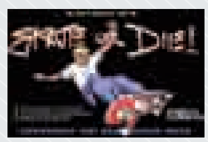
Name: M.U.L.E.
System: Atari 800
Year Released: 1983

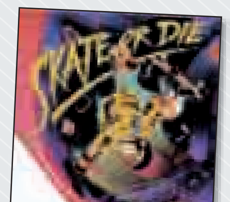




One of the first games published by EA, *M.U.L.E.* was and still is phenomenal. Its origins can actually be traced to Strategic Simulations Inc. Trip explains more, "In 1980 I became one of the founding board members of SSI. This was one of the first computer game companies, and in 1981 they published a game called, *Cartels And Cutthroats*, that was a business simulator that I loved. When I founded EA, I went to Joel Billings of SSI and asked him if I could buy [the rights] so I could make a new and improved version. He declined. [So I tracked down its creator Dan Bunten], and asked if he was interested in having me fund an entirely new game that would try to be a more consumer-orientated simulation. This became one of the first EA development contracts that I put together in the fall of 1982."

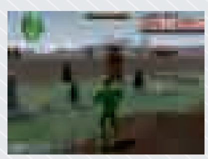
Name: Skate Or Die
Systems: C64, ZX Spectrum, Apple II, NES
Year released: 1987





Skate Or Die was Electronic Arts' very first game developed internally from scratch, and was later ported to other systems such as the NES (by Konami). Though Trip informs us that previously EA worked on porting games to other systems, such as *Doctor J* and *Larry Bird Go One On One* to the PC. Before this, the company was primarily a publisher who dealt with external developers (such as Ozark Softscape). Trip explains more, "*Skate Or Die* was a breakthrough game for Electronic Arts because it showed we could originate and execute new ideas that could perform well in the console market."

Name: Army Men series (40+ games)
Systems: GBC, N64, GBA, GC, PS, PS2, PC, DC, Xbox
Year Released: 1997



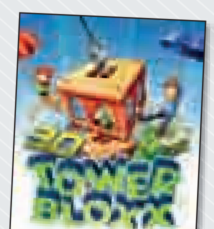


Many people say many bad things about the *Army Men* series. When challenged directly about this, Trip was adamant, "*Army Men* was a simple and compelling concept that resulted in a series of casual action games with a sense of humour and good stories. About seven million were sold, and a lot of customers bought more than one. To each his own. I think it is a matter of taste; you may hate rap but if seven million people buy rap albums then it suggests that there is a disagreement over taste."

Name: Tower Bloxx
System: Mobile Phones
Year Released: 2005

"Retro fans would like many of our games because, like classic arcade games, we help people 'Seize the Minute', and we focus the design on classic controls and game mechanics," revealed Hawkins. "*Tower Bloxx* is a great example." Your goal is to build residential skyscrapers, and it's designed to use only one button. At the time of writing, mobile analyst Stuart Dredge said at GDC that it was one of the best mobile games around – previously a Game Of The Year award winner too.





WILLIAM "TRIP" M HAWKINS III

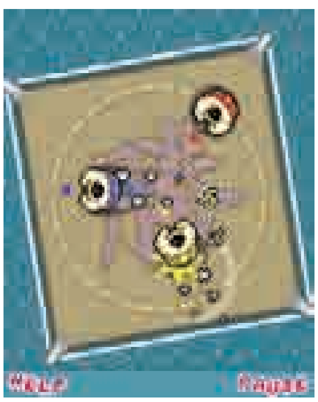


» Digital Chocolate, Trip's new venture, develops and distributes mobile phone games that cater to a variety of tastes. Some interesting titles include: *Pitfall, Sumo Smash, Amoebas*, and *MLSN Sport Picks*

"CONSUMER INTEREST MOVED TOWARD THE EXERCISING OF OUR TESTOSTERONE, AND TOWARD PROPERTY LICENCES THAT LEAVE LESS ROOM FOR INNOVATION"

TRIP HAWKINS







were proposed, debated, and ultimately scrapped. Trip wanted something that had the same resonance as the film company United Artists. Marketing man Bing Gordon came up with Electronic Artists, which was countered by another employee stating that it was the developers who were the artists. Tim Mott modified it to Electronic Arts, and it was voted for and accepted by the group sometime around two o'clock in the morning.

The name is significant since Electronic Arts has always respected developers, treating them more like superstars and giving full credit (with photos) in their games. Contrast this against Atari's policy of regarding developers as little better than anonymous labourers on a production line.

Along with this fresh and far more positive attitude, Trip wanted a unique, more artistic type of packaging: EA's trademark – album covers. He explains, "One of my mantras is, 'creativity is the rearranging of the old in a new way', which I had learned from a Disney alumnus named Mike Vance. My reference points for EA were Hollywood for product development, and the record business for promotion and distribution. I wanted to treat developers as artists and I wanted packaging to be great, yet cost effective."

In May 1983, EA launched five games mainly for the Atari 800. These were *Hard Hat Mack, Archon, Pinball Construction Set, Worms!* (not that one), and the phenomenal *M.U.L.E.* Talking about his early days at EA, and the launch of these games, you can almost sense a hint of nostalgia in Trip's words. "The vision I had for the industry was games like *M.U.L.E.*, and [later] *Madden*, that are really fun but that satisfy my ethos of, 'simple, hot, and deep'. My idea was that consumers would learn while having fun, [partly] because the topics and subject matter are worth learning about. And the games were high quality in terms of usability and professional execution. You understand football much better if you play *Madden*."

But what does he think of the industry today, I ask? "What is disappointing is how consumer interest moved toward the exercising of our testosterone, and toward property licences that leave less room for innovation. So, if you wanted to present a topic like economics today, the producers today would put it in a *Harry Potter* game and would include shooting and fighting. I have a higher opinion of humanity and aspire to help people reach for that higher level." Hearing such an opinion on the industry, which many gamers will agree with, I decide to press the issue. What does Trip think of its progress since he stepped down? More controversially, what does he think of the EA Spouse blog? His answer is tactful, but raises several points. "EA is faced with an industry-wide problem. The continuously rising costs of production that make console game publishing a lot like theatrical release film-making. In both cases they rely heavily on licences and sequels out of fear that original ideas might be costly flops. The EA Spouse episode is a direct result of trying to manage some of the unwieldy costs and project tasks you have on these huge games. Culturally, EA has gone from an intimate and passionate company to a big company with all the attributes."





» Under Trip's watchful direction, Electronic Arts played a role in many of history's best-loved videogames, including *Jungle Strike* and *Populous*

JAPAN TAKES OVER

Everyone knows of the 1984 videogame crash in the USA, which eventually led to Japan gaining market control when Nintendo and then Sega stepped in. Possibly a sensitive subject, I wanted to hear a first-hand account of people's reactions to Japanese developers making in-roads into American business. For Trip, the results were positive. "When Nintendo entered in 1985, many people were thinking, 'Atari killed the videogame, didn't you get the memo?' but Nintendo clearly innovated and had a vision. There were no American companies that were willing to take the risks and blaze the trail that Nintendo did. I have a great respect for [that], although I did not like it at the time because it's not a publisher-friendly model."

This publisher model would cause EA to choose sides in the 16-bit console wars, resulting in a boon for Sega. David Sheff's book *Game Over* gives a fascinating account of Trip's actions from the perspective of Nintendo, showing that EA provided some major leverage for the rival Genesis in America. I asked Trip to elaborate on events, "There was not much of an opportunity for a publisher to profit from the 8-bit NES, and it was a technically limited platform. But Sega had a two-year lead on Nintendo when it went upscale to the 16-bit MC68000 processor for the 1988 launch of the Mega Drive in Japan. We had already done a lot of development on computers using that CPU, and it was a quantum leap in performance."

Which brings us to EA's resilience and technological skill as mentioned in Sheff's opus. "Rather than accept Sega's offer for a clone of the Nintendo licence agreement, I took EA down the risky path of reverse-engineering the Genesis. There was quite a high-stakes poker game played around this, and the result was that EA got a great deal and made a huge commitment to the platform. Combined with Sega, we helped garner nearly half of the 16-bit market and EA was established as a console leader and a much more profitable company."

Despite the massive success garnered by siding with Sega in 1990, Trip became sceptical of the hardware market and felt it needed a boost. This led to him developing the 3DO system and eventually stepping away from EA completely. His lengthy account of the tumultuous events that occurred prove fascinating, and shows a very human side to Trip. "I lined up the support of Matsushita, but when Sony and Sega [entered] the market, software publishers including EA felt they had to play the field. Sony ultimately spent more than 20 times the capital that 3DO had, and convinced publishers to pay higher royalties that Sony could reinvest to subsidise lower hardware prices. By 1994, it was clear that 3DO was struggling and that EA was moving away from 3DO. [We] therefore had to take severe steps to survive, which would push 3DO to become a competing game publisher. I was advised legally that I should not be on the board of both companies because of competitive conflicts of interest. Also, the EA board became much more conservative after the big win with Sega. Now that they had something valuable to protect, they did not want to continue to have the risk profile that had helped EA to become successful in the first place. In effect, I was stranded at 3DO not unlike how Captain Bligh was left in a lifeboat. But I chose poorly. I could not be with both companies as they pulled apart, so I chose 3DO because I felt obligated to help the one that was like a child having surgery in the intensive care ward of the hospital. EA was more like a rebellious teenager that was growing up and could fend for itself. In hindsight, it is obvious that I should have stayed at EA."

But Trip has no regrets, and is stoical about the tough times in his life. "I am who I am, and I learned a great deal from my experiences. And while I did not grow financially, I grew personally in dimensions that have made me a much better and happier person today than I might have been had I stayed with the mothership."

It certainly did him no harm; in 2005 he was the eighth person recorded in the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences Hall of Fame (Miyamoto was the first), and prior to that he was voted 15th Most Fascinating Entrepreneur by Inc.com, as well as having been featured in *Forbes* magazine and many other publications.

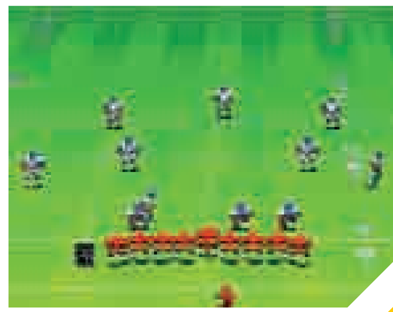
Trip Hawkins is frank with regards to his past mistakes, and is currently head of Digital Chocolate, about which he says, "Sometimes I succeed, sometimes I don't, but I take what is coming to me and I take responsibility for it. I learn from my mistakes, and go back to the drawing board. I can say with clarity that I am applying the lessons that I learned from 3DO. As they say, God doesn't give you anything you can't handle."

FOOTY, AMERICAN STYLE



Madden Football is arguably the most successful sports videogame ever, with near immeasurable sales figures. Trip is credited on several of the early versions, "During [this] time the staff came to call it, 'Trip's Folly'. Nobody believed in it except me and a couple of my guys. I was personally in charge of *Madden* projects for the first seven years that we made them, including personally designing the AI, assembling the playbook, and rating all the players."

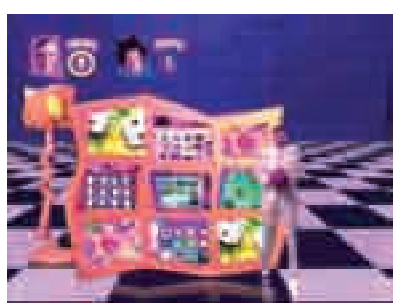
The game also courted controversy, as reported in 1988's September issue of *Antic* magazine, "EA has been sued for $7.3 million by Bethesda Softworks, developers of the *Gridiron!* football simulation. EA had been contracted for exclusive Atari ST and Amiga rights to the game. Bethesda's lawsuit claims EA halted release of *Gridiron!* after incorporating major portions of the program into a proposed *John Madden Football* game."



When asked, Trip responded sternly, "Bethesda's supposed lawsuit was baseless and the result of a $15,000 disagreement of the disposition of unsaleable inventory. The matter was resolved for something equal to or less than the value of that inventory".

> "I FIRST DETERMINED THAT I WOULD START ELECTRONIC ARTS IN 1982. YES, THAT'S RIGHT, I PLANNED IT SPECIFICALLY SEVEN YEARS IN ADVANCE"
> TRIP HAWKINS

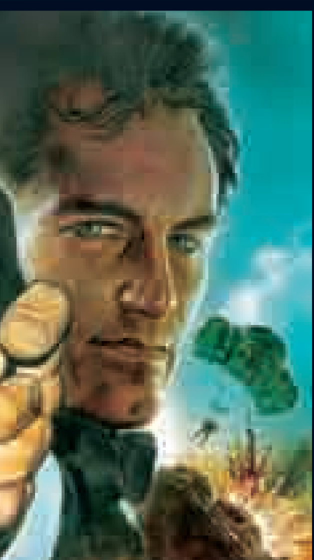


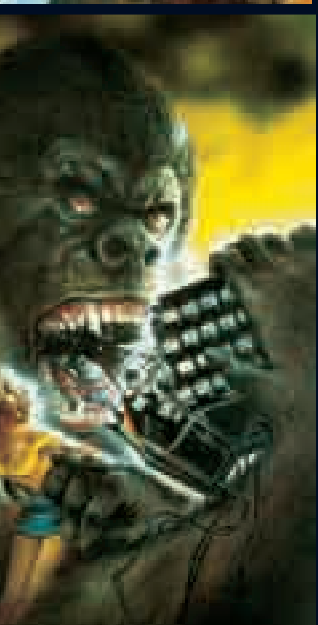


» What does Trip like playing? On several occasions he's confessed to still being a big fan of 3DO's simultaneous four-player game, *Twisted*. We have to admit, it is great fun in multi-player









SHEER ART ATTACK

FOR MANY GAMERS, MAGAZINES SUCH AS CRASH, ZZAP!64 AND AMTIX WERE MORE THAN JUST MAGAZINES TO FLICK THROUGH, THEY WERE WORKS OF ART TO BE TREASURED FOREVER. THEY ALSO HAPPENED TO FEATURE THE FANTASTIC ARTWORK OF OLIVER FREY. RETRO GAMER CAUGHT UP WITH THE MAN WHO HAS BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH GREAT GAMING ART…

Forget all that nonsense about not judging a book by its cover. When it came to Crash magazine, Oliver Frey's cover art was the principal reason many Eighties gamers went out and picked up a copy of the Spectrum magazine. Aliens, monsters, ninjas… whatever Frey turned his hand to, it invariably looked spectacular, and his artwork is still the subject of many a fevered retro conversation today.

Now a publishing director, Frey has a distinguished (and international) past in the games industry. Born in Zurich in 1948, Frey was the eldest of three children. Although both his parents came from southern Switzerland (and thus spoke fluent Italian), living in Zurich meant the family picked up German too. When Frey Senior's job took him to England for three years, the family followed, adding to their polyglot upbringing. "Childhood was what I'd call happy and normal," recalls Frey, "albeit with a more international upbringing than my peers of the time."

It was Oliver's arrival in England in 1956 that ignited his love of drawing, with his main inspiration coming from the Eagle comic and its classic *Dan Dare* strips. "I started copying the drawings, was praised at school for them, and it carried on from there," recalls Frey, who says that artistic talent runs in his family. "My great-grandfather on dad's side was a painter who ended up working in America for many years, mainly in landscapes and portraiture, before returning home and buying a house from the proceeds."

Despite his love for Dan Dare's adventures and his uncanny ability to mimic them, Frey was really inspired by the work of Frank Bellamy. "While *Dan Dare* was great, it was Frank Bellamy, the illustrator of the back-cover true-life stories and other series, who really inspired me," explains Frey. "His dynamic, filmic style of clear line and colour art was (and still is) some of the best produced in Britain. Don Lawrence was good too, but less skilled at figure drawing and much more painterly in style – however, I did write to him with some samples of my work when I was about 14, and he was kind enough to reply with an encouraging note on my future prospects."

Although he had to return to Switzerland in 1959, Frey convinced an English friend to send him copies of Eagle, and as he continued to lap up the adventures of his comic-book heroes, Frey realised that his calling in life was as an artist. After persuading his parents to let him take a correspondence course while at school, Frey began studying the Famous Artists Series, a collection of three huge books that was specifically aimed at commercial art.

"It started with the simplest basics and then went on to fully professional aspects of the art, including the psychological ins and outs of composition and getting the visual message across to the reader in the most impactive possible way," Frey says. "At the end of each chapter you were given a test assignment that you sent off to be judged and criticised by your teachers in Holland. The course demanded self-discipline because you were sat at



home doing it with no supervision and at your own pace. I learned just about everything I know in the area of commercial art from Famous Artists, and if something like this still existed I would recommend it to any serious aspirant to the trade of illustrator – no fancy art-school nonsense, just down-to-earth figurative and compositional skill-building."

FROM SOLDIER TO SUPERMAN

With the course passed and out of the way, Frey considered his options and, during a trip to England, approached the London Film School with aspirations of being a film director. Despite his enthusiasm ("I was keen on *Bond* movies, historical epics and most of all on *Lawrence Of Arabia*") he was advised to try again when he was a little older. Disappointed but unperturbed, Frey returned to Switzerland in order to begin his compulsory national service. "Army service in Switzerland is a given, so you don't think too much about it," reveals Frey. "Whatever the reservations, it's a helpful, maturing conclusion to your school years. You're thrown together with kids your age, from all walks of life, and learn how to get on together as you're drilled and ordered about – it helps get rid of much youthful egocentricity… and instils a (now unfashionable) sense of duty."

After six months of national service, Frey took a place studying English literature and history at Berne University. In Frey's own words, this decision was "a disaster"; the film-loving student lasted only one term on the course, feeling he couldn't fit in with his fellow students, so he persuaded his father to send him to the London Film School (then known as the London School of Film Technique).

As any student will know, studying – particularly in London – isn't easy, and it wasn't long before Frey was trying to find ways to support himself. "I needed to make money while at film school, and thought that the War Picture Libraries – small, cheaply printed black-and-white 64-page comic-strip stories – might be a possibility," remembers Frey. "I sent in some samples, and the editor, EJ Bensberg, gave me my first real illustrating job. I carried on drawing them throughout the Seventies, and my money situation while studying improved radically."

Despite a further three-month spell in National Service (where he turned down the chance to go to officer school) Frey decided that he wanted to continue with his film course and returned to England once his service had ended. While he continued to illustrate for War Picture Libraries, Frey

Graeme Kidd – blinged up to the nines in his mayoral robes. A far cry from the days of working on Crash magazine



BIGGER AND BETTER THINGS

Crash may no longer be around, but its staff went on to bigger and better things. We know of course what happened to Mr Frey after the magazine's demise, but Frey was able to shed some light on the whereabouts of other ex-employees. "Graeme Kidd is Ludlow's mayor, and we still meet in the town. David Western is a friend and neighbour. Carol Kinsey (the Crash mail-order goddess) is now Carol Parkinson, having married Crash's screen photographer Michael Parkinson, and I see both regularly. Warren Lapworth (Zzap!64 reviewer) works with me, as does Newsfield's first employee, Matthew Uffindell. And of course I still work with Roger Kean and my brother Franco in our book company, Thalamus Publishing."



The Frey brothers and Roger Kean together in the early days of Newsfield. They still work together today, though the spaceships have now gone…

started work on a film script and tracked down a friend from film school, Roger Kean. The two planned to set up a film company in Switzerland but had trouble pitching their idea. Disappointed with the failed project, Frey continued his freelance work while Kean went on to become a freelance film editor (although their paths would cross at a later date when they formed Newsfield Limited).

As Frey's reputation improved so did the offers and before long he found himself drawing the very comic strips that had inspired him as a child. Although he eventually got to work on the likes of *Dan Dare* and the *Trigan Empire*, his dream work wasn't quite how he had imagined it… "Working on the strips was disappointing," laments Frey. "By the time I did a stint on *Dan Dare* it had gone to cheap newsprint, the stories were numbskull and the character had been changed out of recognition. Taking over from Don Lawrence on the *Trigan Empire* in Look And Learn magazine was better, but all they wanted was a replacement for Lawrence after he left for more lucrative pastures." Still, the work for such classic comic strips meant that Frey's art was reaching a greater audience than before and this created exciting new projects for the talented artist, the most important being part of the opening credits of *Superman: The Movie*.

"That was a time when I trying to get into the film technicians' union," recalls Frey. "The then head of the union pointed me towards the *Superman* production because they needed a visualiser for the flying sequences. At the interview with the art director it transpired they were having enough trouble coping with the action director's flights of fancy on this without needing to encourage him with even more exciting (in other words, expensive) visuals. However, director Richard Donner wanted to start the movie with the camera panning over a Thirties Superman comic to focus on a final frame of the Daily Globe building, which would dissolve to a real-life model shot. A hurried briefing from Richard in his office – which amounted to 'I need a cop patrolling the streets, pull up into overhead view of Metropolis' streets, zoom in to this building. You can do it, kid' – led to me producing the cover and two pages, which they coloured up and used in the film."

NEXT STOP, LUDLOW

Pleased with his success, but eager to push himself further, Frey's next project was the one that would make his name. In 1983, with his brother Franco and old friend Roger Kean, Frey set up Newsfield to operate Crash Micro Games Action, a mail order service based in Ludlow that sold Spectrum software. "I produced illustrations for all of our ads and the catalogue of games we sent out, while Roger Kean wrote the reviews," says Frey of his early days on Crash. "Then someone suggested we turn the catalogue into a proper magazine, with real reviews. We sent a copy of the catalogue to a magazine distributor, who showed it to the central buyer at WH Smith. To our surprise, the Smith's man thought it would work if it was a 'real' magazine."

It might have been a great idea in practice, but putting a magazine together wasn't the easiest of tasks, especially from a financial perspective. Kean borrowed £2,500 from Barclaycard (allegedly to pay for a new kitchen) only to find out that their distributor had gone bust by the second issue of the magazine. After receiving no money from their publisher, it appeared that Crash's days as a magazine were over before they began. But, as Frey explains, fortune smiled on the team in several ways. "Our ad manager did a fabulous deal with the mighty distributor Comag. They loved Crash and bailed us out by collecting the first two issues' revenues and advancing us for the next six. Luck was also with us on the printing front; the printer went bust, so we didn't have to pay anything out for about eight months. That ended all our cash flow problems." Money was only one side of the story, though, and the small team soon found out that there were plenty of other problems involved with the running of a monthly magazine.

"Editorially, it was hard work," reveals Frey. "I think the first issue had around 75,000 words – a hell of a lot for the time. It was all typed on a small electric typewriter, sent as manuscript to a London typesetter and then

"IF THE ILLUSTRATIONS IN CRASH LOOKED SPLODGY THEN BLAME THE COW GUM… HORRIBLE STUFF!"



came back a week later as galleys to be laid out. I did a lot of 'cow-gumming' along with Roger, and usually filled in the mono illustrations direct onto the layout sheets. If some look splodgy, blame it on the damned cow gum – horrible stuff!"

Aside from designing the body of the magazine, Frey was also responsible for producing Crash's covers – the work for which he has become best known. However, he wasn't at leisure to spend four weeks coming up with a fantastic concept. "Once editorial had made a decision on what topic or game warranted the front-page position, it was up to me to visualise it in an eye-grabbing, magazine-selling way," Frey explains. "By the time Zzap! and Amtix (our Amstrad mag) came along it meant three covers plus ancillary editorial illustrations a month; add sundry giveaway posters and you had a full work schedule. In the first year of Crash I also drew four colour pages of a comic strip a month: anyone remember *The Terminal Man*? Staffing was also a problem. The local schoolboy reviewers were plentiful, and pretty good too, but as we grew we needed more professional staff in every area, and frankly none of us was prepared for the task of management. But I think the inevitable tensions combined with the level of freedom editorial and design enjoyed created some of the best magazines of their kind."

M'LEARNED FRIENDS

As Crash's success continued, so did the confidence of the team and the respect the magazine earned in the industry. After becoming increasingly irritated by Sinclair User's editorial attitude towards Crash and its reviews, Frey and the rest of the team decided to hit back. The end result made retro history and saw Crash spoofing EMAP's Sinclair User in a four-page piece that subsequently got withdrawn from sale (issue 19 if you're planning to look for it on eBay). "Perhaps it was a part of the Newsfield charm that a good bashing session in the pub turned into a full-scale plan for the lampoon," recalls Frey. "Obviously, had we lawyers on board like any 'proper' magazine publisher the notion would have been shot down in flames before it ever hit the layout boards. But then so probably would have most of Crash or Zzap!64. I guess we all thought it a bit of a joke and that it would be taken that way by EMAP; Sinclair User's editor thought so too and tried to stop his publisher taking action. The first we knew was when Roger Kean received a 'courtesy call' from Sinclair User's counsel warning of the impending injunction hearing in two days' time."

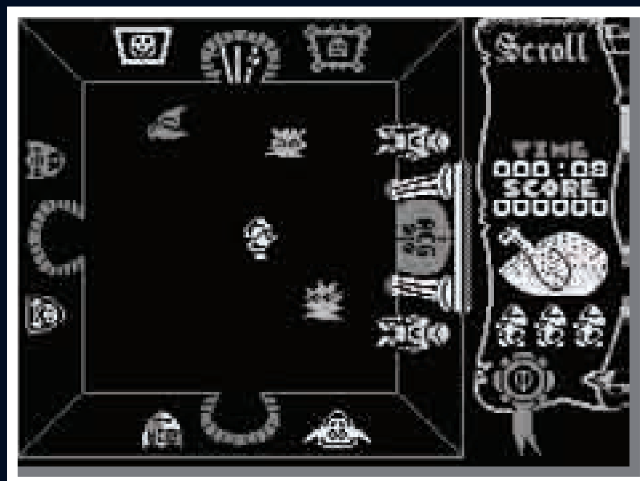
Newsfield lost the case, but not in a way that EMAP had expected. Sinclair User wanted the spoof issue of Crash pulled because it was defamatory; the judge disagreed, but he did grant an injunction on the grounds that it breached copyright as the lampoon was so accurate. As copyright infringement is far harder to prove than defamation, EMAP didn't have such a cut-and-dried case – and Newsfield lived to see another day.

"As it happened, about 60 per cent of the copies had already gone into wholesale, the rest were recalled and the offending four pages were guillotined out, so Newsfield didn't suffer too badly financially, and later made an out of court settlement," Frey explains. "The whole affair, however, had a highly beneficial effect on Crash sales; we may have been 'pirates' to the London publishing community, but our readers loved us for it."

> "IT'S NICE TO KNOW YOUR WORK IS APPRECIATED, BUT I CURL UP WHEN PEOPLE PRAISE ME TO MY FACE"

PLAY THE GAME

Despite playing such a pivotal role in the gaming press, Oli Frey never really took to playing games. When asked if he'd describe himself as a gamer (past or present), he admits that he'd have to say no, although he has played his fair share of titles. "I used to play the ones I mapped for Crash and Zzap! extensively to get the feel for them and enjoyed doing so," he says. "My main interest was in understanding the programmers' intentions, often hidden in those blobs and squiggles, in order to create a cover image that would do them proud. I did complete Ultimate's *Atic Atak* and I got quite good at playing the original *Sonic The Hedgehog*…"



Atic Atak obviously had that special something that made Oli Frey want to play it right through to the end

Sadly, Newsfield eventually went under in 1991, although Crash itself continued for another year under the Europress banner. The demise of Newsfield is worthy of its own feature and while Frey was understandably "gutted" about the closure of the company he had helped form, he was at least able to take it in his stride. "You have to carry on making a living… Actually, I had booked a week in Egypt several weeks before and saw no reason to cancel it as it had already been paid for, so I was able to console myself in 35 degrees, sipping cocktails with umbrellas."

Although he's no longer creating magazine covers, Frey continues to produce impressive artwork (mostly for publications from Thalamus). The subject matter may be vastly different – his latest project is a graphic novelisation of a forthcoming blockbuster novel by American author, Steven Saylor – but the way he goes about creating his masterpieces is still the same. "I don't do any deep breathing or yoga exercises," laughs Frey, who cites artists such as Eugene Delacroix, Norman Rockwell and Frank Frazetta as personal favourites. "Once I know what I'm supposed to illustrate, I start visualising scenes in my mind. Then I start scribbling mini-compositions on the backs of envelopes (so rough that only I can make sense of them) to try to capture the dynamics I want. Then I fix on a thumbnail I like and pencil it up – unfortunate colleagues may have to pose for face and hand details (the only use I make of photo reference). One thing I always do is hold the drawing up to a mirror to see it as new, as I suffer from astigmatism and faces can become lopsided."

While the way he goes about creating his work remains unchanged, the same cannot be said for the tools he now uses. "I once said in an interview in Crash that I could never see myself using a computer for illustration.

Well, that was then… In recent years virtually none of my artwork has ended up as a painting on a board; my airbrush compressor has rusted and all the coloured inks have long dried up. I still draw the original on paper, either in line or halftone, but I then scan it in and colour up on computer. However, while this has suited a lot of recent work, the result seems to me to lack the fizz and verve necessary for action images — it's neat and tidy, but lacks the gutsyness I like. I recently did a series of 'carnage' battle scenes of Vikings, and no matter how hard I try to think otherwise, I know they would have been proper scenes from hell had I done them in ink and acrylic."

The tools may have changed, but one thing Frey still finds difficult to accept is dealing with the adulation his work has attracted. "I suppose I shouldn't, but I still get embarrassed," he admits. "Of course, that doesn't mean I'm unhappy about it – it's pleasing to know that your work is appreciated, but I do tend to curl up when people praise me to my face."

Unfortunately for Frey, the spotlight will be once again turned on his work, as a brand new book celebrating his creations is now available from Thalamus Publishing. The Fantasy Art Of Oliver Frey is an oustanding collection of some of Frey's best images and is bound to please his many fans. "We have material for a second book, but sales of the original will decide whether we go ahead with it or not" confirms Frey. The lavish tome is certainly a far cry from the now crumbling paper of those 20-year-old Crash and Zzap!64 magazines that he used to illustrate. And if you ask us, it's high time Frey's modern masterpieces appeared on the coffee tables of retro gamers around the world.







THE MAKING OF...

CREATURES

Regarded as one of the finest games to grace Commodore's beige box, Creatures hides a vicious streak under a veil of cuteness. Developers John and Steve Rowlands give us an insight into the title's conception, design and development, and also what compelled them to add torture-screens to a cute platform game



"TRANSLATING IDEAS FROM PAPER TO SCREEN WAS ALWAYS A CHALLENGE. IF IT WASN'T, YOU KNEW THAT THE IDEA WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH" JOHN ROWLANDS

Frenetic shoot-'em-up action, tricky platform sequences and a trio of gory torture screens – *Creatures* has it all. Its variety of play, including varied interfaces for controlling the main character, along with the lush visuals and stomping soundtrack led to the game being hailed as a success in the early Nineties and its current position as a firm favourite of Commodore 64-owning retro-gamers.

The game went into development shortly after developers, John and Steve Rowlands, had completed work on sci-fi blaster *Retrograde*. "Having spent two years working on space-based shoot-'em-ups, we needed to keep the design process fresh, and needed a style we'd not worked with before," recalls John. "The cute-'em-up was the obvious choice." A back-story was developed, with furry creatures ('fuzzy-wuzzies') from outer-space crash-landing on an island inhabited by miserable demons. The demons took offence to the noise made by the cheerful, partying fuzzy-wuzzies and also at their audacity in naming the island 'The Hippest Place in the Known Universe', and so tricked them into attending a party, whereupon the fuzzy-wuzzies were kidnapped and placed in the demons' dankest dungeons. When developing the concept, the brothers' sense of humour led them to integrate slapstick violence. "It occurred to us that this mixing of extremes had the potential to raise both smiles and eyebrows. We realised that humorous violence was the way forward, and so the torture screens were born."

Devised primarily as a diversion from the platform elements, each of the three torture screens finds hero Clyde Radcliffe desperately trying to save one of his buddies from certain, gory and bloody death. The screens are reminiscent of cartoons, with the demons using elaborate contraptions and set-ups to execute the fuzzy-wuzzies, and you making use of cunningly placed items to stop them. Design-wise, John recalls that the ideas typically started with the 'device' that may eventually kill Clyde's captured friend – from there, it was a case of placing a set of puzzles around the potential victim. As for the number of torture screens, John says: "We didn't have time to develop the three that *Creatures* contained, never mind additional ones! The three screens in *Creatures* were the only ones we designed at the time, so everything made it into the final game. It wasn't until *Creatures 2* that we expanded our collection of torture screen concepts."

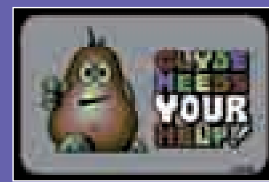
But what did publisher Thalamus think when it became apparent that *Creatures*' cute exterior was actually hiding a game more bloodthirsty than most shoot-'em-ups? "All we had to do was talk about cutting up cute animals, and they were hooked," claims John. "If an idea made us laugh, and was also technically possible, it made it into the game."

However the platform action forms the bulk of the game, with

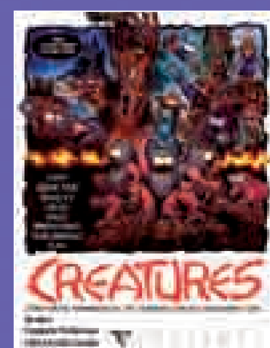

» Clyde at the start of his quest, blissfully unaware of the perils that await him


» Like the Rowland brothers' other C64 offerings, *Creatures*' visuals are some of the finest seen on the system

IN THE KNOW



- **» PUBLISHER:** THALAMUS SOFTWARE LTD
- **» DEVELOPER:** APEX COMPUTER PRODUCTIONS
- **» RELEASED:** 1990
- **» GENRE:** PLATFORM/ARCADE
- **» EXPECT TO PAY:** £5-£10





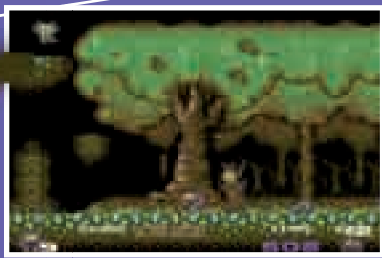
THEY SAID:

"CREATURES IS THE BEST ORIGINAL GAME SINCE TURRICAN… THE THREE TORTURE SCREENS ARE UNDOUBTEDLY THE BEST SUB-GAMES EVER! BRILLIANT"

ZZAP!64

CREATURES





» Deep in the Black Forests of Gateau, Clyde flees from a particularly vicious tree



» In the dingy dungeons, Clyde tactlessly poses in front of one of his strung-up fellow fuzzy-wuzzies

THAT'S DEDICATION

The contrast between the memories of those that played *Creatures* and those that created it were pretty stark at the time, as John explains: "For years after the game's release, industry people we'd be introduced to would say, 'You're the guys that did *Creatures*, aren't you?'. They all had this memory of seeing it for the first time and thinking 'wow!'. However, our overriding memory of making the game is the final week of development. We had to hit a pre-Christmas deadline and ended up working a five-day shift at the cassette and disk duplication factory—no sleep for five days, just caffeine pills! We weren't a pretty sight at the end of the week. You know it's time to hit the sack when you're getting prodded every ten seconds, being told to wake up and stop dribbling on the keyboard! Those were the days…"

"THE PROGRESSION FROM DAY TO NIGHT, MORE SPECIFICALLY, FROM SUNNY DAY TO DARK DUNGEONS, WAS INTENDED TO MAKE THE PLAYER FEEL INCREASINGLY ON EDGE" JOHN ROWLANDS

Clyde's journey progressing through meadows, caverns, dark forests, graveyards, a castle and, finally, dungeons. "The progression from day to night – more specifically, from sunny day to dark dungeons – was intended to make the player feel increasingly on edge," explains John. "Although the humour within the game was obvious, notably in the torture screens, we wanted to take things the other way, too, in order to make the player feel slightly frightened, if possible. This is why the castle and dungeons play host to ghouls and ghosts, complete with your buddies hanging in chains."

From the beginning, the Rowlands brothers were keen to encourage variety, not just from a graphical standpoint or via the dynamic soundtrack, which changes depending on your location and circumstances, but also in terms of how Clyde was controlled. Initially, you walk from left to right, zapping demons with your flame breath, and can leap about, to reach higher platforms. Soon, however, you come across a seemingly impassable body of water; leaping on to it sees Clyde zip along on a lily pad, powered by what appears to be a handheld fan. Elsewhere in the game, this device is used to surf down waterfalls, and Clyde can also go scuba-diving in ponds full of hostile marine-life, and, in later levels, fly through the sky on a broomstick. "We liked the idea of multiple player interfaces and came up with those ideas fairly quickly," says John. "They provided a break from the norm, and enabled us to further challenge the player, because the sprites normally used for Clyde's firepower were used for the alternate transport. This meant that when his control method changed, he didn't have access to his weapons."

Control methods aren't the only splashes of variety within *Creatures*: enemies often evolve and mutate as you battle them ("a simple feature to develop, added to keep the player on edge," explains John), and end-of-level battles ensue with tough bosses. "The end-of level enemies somewhat lack a big-boss presence, hence the 64-sprite bosses in *Creatures 2*," says John. "Nevertheless, we wanted to test the player at the end of each stage, so we ramped up the challenge. Most of the arcade games we were playing at the time had bosses, and it was only natural that these games influenced what we created." Luckily, Clyde isn't powerless against these mighty adversaries – the games



» The trio of memorable and surprisingly gory torture screens captured the imagination of C64 owners and also formed the basis for the game's sequel



DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

RETROGRADE
SYSTEM: COMMODORE 64
YEAR: 1989

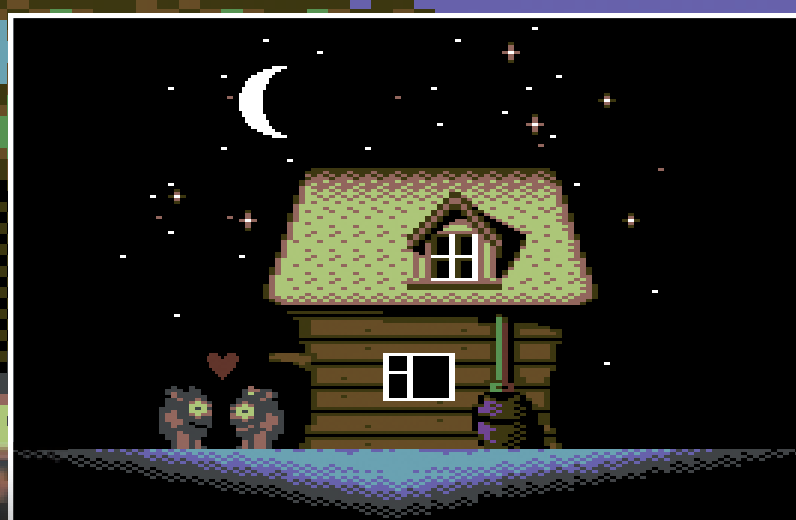
MAYHEM IN MONSTERLAND
SYSTEM: COMMODORE 64
YEAR: 1993

INTERNATIONAL KARATE 2000
SYSTEMS: GAME BOY COLOR
YEAR: 2000

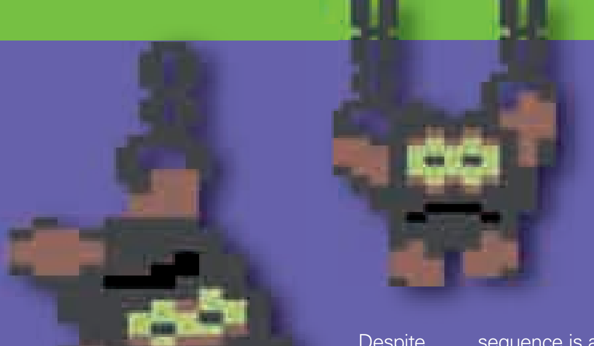




» A small demon, arms raised, tries to scare Clyde, unaware that he's about to be barbecued by Clyde's flame breath



» His quest complete, Clyde invites his mates round for a rave and then hooks up with a female fuzzy-wuzzy. Awww! How sweet!



that influenced the bosses also in part gave rise to *Creatures*' power-up system. During each stage, Clyde can collect 'magic potion creatures', which can be swapped at a between-stage shop for more powerful weapons. *Wardner* inspired the 'droopy' shot, while *R-Type* provided stimulation for Clyde's flame breath. "The ability to build a collection of weapons and select one on the fly was pure *Apex*, though," exclaims John, who admits that while most weapons had a defined purpose "some just looked cool".

The weapons aren't the only thing in the game that looks cool, though: *Creatures* is rightly thought of by many as one of the most visually appealing games for the C64. Although this is largely down to Steve's design skills, the Rowland brothers also came up with some tricks to provide an added edge, the most obvious of which is the non-standard colours many of the demons have. "We hadn't seen the colour-swapping technique elsewhere, but other developers must have had the same idea," says John. "To create a new colour, we swapped colours of similar brightness on alternate frames." Along with the cartoon-like graphics and smooth scrolling, this means the game's visual appeal is immediate and immense, although some elements were restricted by the limitations of the hardware, notably the larger creatures, composed of expanded sprites. "Those things are never cool," admits John, "but sometimes a character's on-screen presence – and, therefore, its size – takes priority over animation space or available sprites."

Despite these issues, John reckons that from a technical point of view, *Creatures* doesn't push the C64 too hard, unlike the Rowlands' later effort, *Mayhem In Monsterland*. "That said, translating ideas from paper to screen was always a challenge," says John. "If it wasn't, you knew that the idea wasn't good enough." And even when you could get something highly technical up and running, that didn't necessarily mean it was a good idea. "One thing that got cut from *Creatures* was a bonus game where Clyde drove a sports car," remembers John. "It wasn't based on gameplay, but purely on the number of parallax scrolling fields we could squeeze on the screen. Although the scrolling showed promise, the gameplay mechanics were lame, so we dropped it."

Rather than force through a vacuous bonus game, the Rowlands brothers instead concentrated on other, simpler areas, many of which improved the user experience. "Each level has a decent intro sequence, motivating the player for the task ahead," says John. The game also has a fully animated game-complete sequence, which involves Clyde inviting his newly rescued friends back to his place for a party. "A game-complete sequence is an acknowledgement by the developer that the player deserves a reward," explains John. "Rather than just offering score bonuses, extra lives, and so on, you get something that looks and sounds cool. The trick is balance – how much development time and RAM do you spend on presentation as opposed to the game itself?"

In the end, it appears John and Steve got the balance right. *Creatures* bagged a Gold Medal in *Zzap!64*, along with an unprecedented seven readers' awards, and plenty of fan-mail made its way to the Rowlands, triggering the development of *Creatures 2*. Sadly, though, that's where Clyde's story ends. "Once we were done with *Creatures 2*, we wanted something larger, faster and more dynamic," says John, who with Steve then went on to create the spectacular *Mayhem In Monsterland* as the brothers' C64 finale. *Creatures* also failed to materialise successfully on other platforms: the Spectrum version remains unreleased, and the 16-bit conversions are a pale shadow of the original. "We didn't have anything to do with them," says John, defensively. "We got on with the C64 sequel and hoped the conversions would rock. As it happens, they were crap, and they didn't sell. Funny that. If we could turn back time, we'd make sure we were involved in the approval process for conversions." But with the brothers still being proud of their C64 creation, is there a glimmer of hope that Clyde might make a belated comeback? "Possibly," says John. "Via our current development company, Infinite Lives (www.infinitelives.tv), we've had enquires for mobile and handheld versions of *Creatures*, so you never know."

MUSIC MAESTRO

One of *Creatures*' most striking elements is its soundtrack, composed by Steve Rowlands, whose C64 music was markedly different from his contemporaries. "That's down to how much time I spent playing arcade games," explains Steve. "This taught me how to apply music effectively to given points in the games we wrote, and *Wardner* in particular provided inspiration for *Creatures*."

Although Steve found the C64's SID chip versatile, it was still restrictive: "Writing for a computer with three channels meant that instead of populating tracks with pauses between notes, you filled the gaps with instruments playing a different part of the tune. This pseudo-layering could contain many different elements of a track, and was most effective when used for bass lines and percussion." Steve explains that when this technique was applied to multiple channels, listeners were often tricked into thinking more than three voices were playing at once. This meant the restriction of two channels for the platform levels (one channel being reserved for spot effects) didn't pile on the pressure. "In fact, the predominately bass and percussion in-game tracks automatically gave them a backing-track feel," says Steve. "As for the torture screens, they used all three channels, but in hindsight, gruesome screams and splat effects might have worked just as well!"

"A GAME-COMPLETE SEQUENCE IS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY THE DEVELOPER THAT THE PLAYER DESERVES A REWARD" JOHN ROWLANDS



OTHER GAMES IN THE SERIES:
Creatures 2: Torture Trouble
System: Commodore 64
Year: 1992



P-47: THE PHANTOM FIGHTER

BLINDED BY THE SUN



- » **PUBLISHER:** JALECO
- » **RELEASED:** 1988
- » **GENRE:** SHOOT-'EM-UP
- » **FEATURED HARDWARE:** ARCADE
- » **EXPECT TO PAY:** £40+PCB



HISTORY

When I first encountered *P-47* in Poole Quay Amusements I was far from impressed with it, even though it was a new addition to my favourite genre. It didn't feature a gripping upgrade system; most of the game's weapons had been seen a hundred times before, while the majority of the game's bosses were dull encounters let down by their easy-to-learn bullet patterns and overall lack of challenge. Yup, Jaleco's latest blaster was no *Gradius* or *R-Type*, but for some reason I just couldn't stop playing the damn thing, and even today I'll fire it up for the odd blast if I have any spare time.

P-47 might not sound too special but it was definitely a grower, and while it initially came across as a rather mundane shooter, it did feature the odd fleeting flash of brilliance that convinced you to carry on playing. Get shot down by the opposition, for example, and you could still temporarily control your plane, although now it was little more than an explosion of steel and fire. Unfortunately, you couldn't fire at enemies or destroy nearby foes by steering into them, but it was a nice touch all the same.

Visually, Jaleco's blaster was rather special as it featured some striking levels, a good array of different environments to fly through and some extremely well detailed sprites enhancing the game's atmosphere no end. The standout though was easily level two's superb sunset, which blew me away the first time I set eyes on it; it's undeniably one of the game's highpoint.

Enemy planes flew in thick-and-fast and attacked with deadly accuracy; the sumptuous beds of cloud you soared over were made up of countless levels of beautiful parallax scrolling, while the games normally harsh soundtrack took on a lifting lilt that, while totally at odds with all the on-screen carnage, perfectly matched the beautiful canvas your plane fought upon. Now where's my PC Engine version…


1UP

DESERT ISLAND DISKS

WHAT CHERISHED GAMES WOULD YOU TAKE TO THE ISLAND?



EUGENE JARVIS

DATAFILE

NAME: EUGENE JARVIS
DATE OF BIRTH: 27 JANUARY 1955
FIRST JOB: PAPERBOY
CURRENTLY: PRESIDENT OF RAW THRILLS
FAVOURITE FILM: A CLOCKWORK ORANGE



» Eugene points out who cut his hair to security staff

THE GREATEST ARCADE GAME DESIGNER OF ALL-TIME? CREATOR OF THE BEST VIDEOGAME EVER MADE? PICK YOUR OWN SUPERLATIVE – EUGENE JARVIS WILL SHRUG, SMILE MODESTLY AND GET BACK TO MAKING GOOD ON HIS CLAIM THAT, 'THE ONLY LEGITIMATE USE OF A COMPUTER IS TO PLAY GAMES'.

Dear reader, if you are ever unfortunate enough to be washed ashore upon a desert island, take some comfort in the knowledge that amongst the undergrowth you are virtually guaranteed to find a *Robotron* cabinet. Of all the games chosen by our esteemed and diverse bunch of castaways over the years, Eugene Jarvis's dual-joystick masterpiece invariably makes it to the tropical paradise. So why does its creator think it has such a special place in gamers hearts?

"It's like soup," Eugene offers, slightly cryptically. "It's all about the mix. You throw in all these different ingredients and they intertwine. *Robotron* is kind of like a really hot Thai Chicken soup. With coconut, maybe".

Robotron is spicy, indeed. All those ingredients – the hundreds of enemies, the conflicting goals of survival and destruction, offensive blasting and defensive manoeuvring – carefully blended to produce a gaming delicacy that has players hungering for more. Eugene included…

"I still play it, but it kind of goes in cycles," he explains. "It's like having a new girlfriend. The first few weeks it's like an obsession, just all-consuming. Then something happens that disgusts you and you go celibate for a while. You simply can not have a casual relationship with *Robotron.*"

Eugene's passion for games is tangible, yet his love affair began with much admiring from afar. Born in the mid-Fifties in California and sharing a birthday with another prodigious talent, Amadeus Mozart, a school visit to IBM introduced him to the cold and aloof super computers that stood behind glass. Communication was restricted to furtive love letters delivered on punch cards, but young Eugene at least learned the language of his sweetheart – FORTRAN. Early programming efforts included a Chess simulator, revealing an enduring fascination with Artificial Intelligence, but as his school days came to an end, his career path was all set to take him in a different direction.

"I was going to be a biochemist. I wanted to cure, like, death! But once I realised there was a significant possibility I wasn't going to find the secret of life, I thought, 'F*ck it – I'll go and have a good time'".

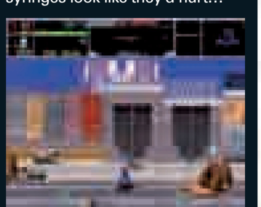
And where better to have a good time in the early games industry than at Atari. Eugene joined the pinball division of the company in 1976, located next to the videogames department, where he remembers the buzz was about a new game called *Breakout*. He was doing similarly ground-breaking work in the pinball field: getting the lights to flash in sequence on *Airborne Avenger*, his collaboration with legendary pinball designer Steve Ritchie, may not seem like a major achievement, but back then he was considered 'a miracle worker.'

Eugene's pinball experience led naturally to a move on to Williams, the market leader based in Chicago and it coincided with the company considering a shift into the increasingly lucrative videogames business. He saw his chance to take centre stage – pinball programmers tended to play second fiddle to the playfield designers – and pushed the idea of developing a game to the

YOU MUST PLAY...

You simply must

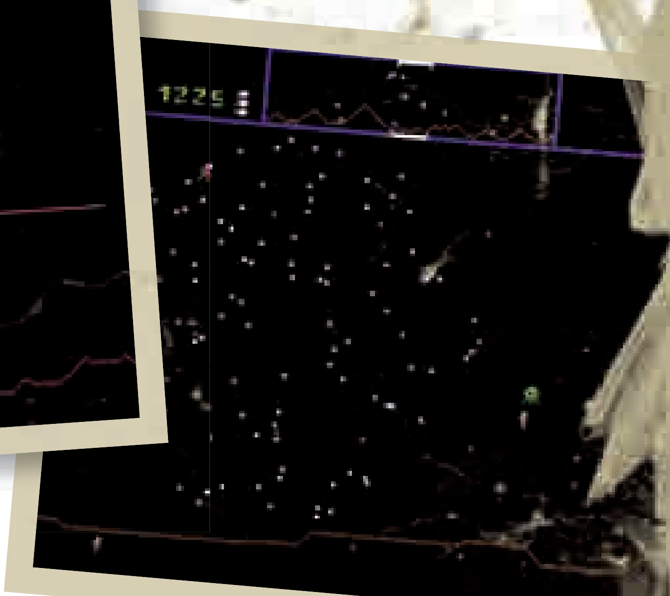
Of course you must play *Defender, Stargate* and *Robotron*, but you're undoubtedly playing those already, so for a dose of something different, try Eugene's anti-drug diatribe, *NARC*. A hugely entertaining scrolling shoot, beat and blow-'em-up, especially in co-op mode, it gets the 'Just Say No' message across far more effectively than the cast of *Grange Hill*. Those giant syringes look like they'd hurt…





» *Robotron*: The Castaways Choice





» **Above left:** Nab four humanoids and head for the Stargate, yer show-offs... **Right:** No landscape and a pack of angry mutants. Insert Coin shortly

management. The response was positive and succinct: 'Ok Eugene, you go f*cking do it.'

Eugene had his mandate and a deadline – the crucially important Amusement and Music Operators Association annual show (AMOA) was ten months away – but as yet, no clear game concept. After spending four months reworking *Space Invaders* and *Asteroids* before deciding both efforts 'sucked' (though the 'thrust' and 'hyperspace' buttons of the latter would make the transition to the new project), he decided the way forward was not to confine the player to single screen.

"*Defender* was inspired by the coolness of flight. Everyone dreams about being able to fly, so we thought, 'Let's make a game where you really can…'"

The project suddenly had a direction – initially just left to right, until the 'Reverse' button was added. By pioneering the use of scrolling, Eugene and his small team had created a whole game world, where what was happening off-screen was as important as what was occurring on it. And much of what was filling the player's field-of-vision were those spectacular explosions.

"I'd hired this kid Sam Dicker and he was responsible for so many of the cool effects," acknowledges Eugene. "The 1Mhz hardware helped – it allowed bit-mapped graphics and we could make each pixel into its own projectile and throw it across the screen. In fact, we found it looked much better if we made, like, four of something explode! Once we started blowing shit up, we knew we had something cool. Who'd remember *Defender* if it had tiny little explosions?"

"ONCE WE STARTED BLOWING SHIT UP, WE KNEW WE HAD SOMETHING COOL. WHO'D REMEMBER DEFENDER IF IT HAD TINY LITTLE EXPLOSIONS?" EUGENE JARVIS

There was almost no *Defender* to remember at all. As the AMOA deadline approached, the team took to 'patching' – tapping hex instructions directly into the code to save on the 45 minutes that properly recompiling would take. It was highly risky, as a power failure at any time during the final week of development would have seen the entire game wiped out, but at 4am on the morning of the show, the game was ready.

"We burned the chips, ready to take to the show and they didn't work. F*ck! We tried again and thank god, this time they did. I went home for a shower, put on a suit, walked into the show and plugged in our game…"

The rest is history. *Defender* was a huge critical and commercial success, establishing Williams as a major force in the videogames industry and brought Eugene fame (rather than fortune at this stage). He even, suprisingly perhaps, featured in Playboy magazine. Was that full frontal nudity or a tasteful shot from the side, Eugene?

"Hey, I kept my lab coat on throughout! They were heady times though. They even slipped me the number of some Playmate, but I never called. The fool that I was..."

Flushed with success, Williams made the naïve assumption that if two chaps plucked from the street could produce such a hit, then surely if they hired 40, the quarters would continue flowing ad infinitum. The resulting bureaucracy as the company rapidly expanded left Eugene disillusioned and he quit to form Vid Kidz with fellow Williams programmer Larry DeMar. And when Williams realised the fundamental flaw in their logic- "they had 40 monkeys and 40 typewriters, but no game" – it was these two musketeers that they turned to in desperation.

"They needed something in four months, so a sequel seemed like a good idea," recalls Eugene. "We'd bought this incredibly expensive development system, the Motorola Exorcisor, which cost $50K, so to get the most out of it, I programmed all day and then Larry took the night shift. It was kind of how Electronic Arts send its stuff to studios in different time zones now. We pioneered that!"

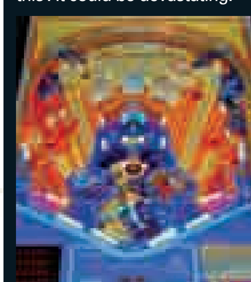
So the dynamic duo retired to Larry's bedroom and set about coding *Stargate* round the clock. The game built on the strengths of its forebear and introduced ingenious new features such as the 'Inviso' button and the opportunity for expert players to skip ahead levels by carrying rescued humanoids through the Stargate, well before *Mario*'s Warp Zones.

The game was delivered on time and though sales were healthy, *Stargate* (Williams changed the title to *Defender II* years later due to a trademark dispute) never quite received the adulation of the original. "I thought it was the better game," Eugene asserts. "It was smoother, the explosions were more beautiful and the action was greater. I guess people remember their first girlfriend, even if their second was hotter."

Vid Kidz turned up the temperature further with their next project. Though the theme of protecting humans remained, *Robotron* consciously moved away from the free flight of *Defender* and instead confined the player to a claustrophobic single screen, teeming with adversaries. The multitude of buttons were also replaced by a unique twin joystick control set-up. The decision was partly prompted by the desire to give players the freedom to shoot and move independently (something that Stern's *Bezerk*, an obvious influence, had denied), but also in response to the untimely car accident Eugene suffered – he could still operate the sticks with an arm in plaster.

PINBALL WIZARD

Eugene worked on three pinball tables while at Atari – *The Atarians, Time 2000* and *Airborne Avenger* – and learned much about early electronic sound synthesizers; knowledge he'd later apply to create the memorable sound effects used in *Defender* and *Robotron*. His time at Atari also gave him an insight into the idiosyncratic management techniques of bosses Nolan Bushnell and Gene Lipkin. "They'd both wander in say once a month and Nolan would be all like, 'Hey, that's cool, let's go and have a joint in the parking lot and talk about it'. Then Gene would play your game for 20 seconds, something you could have been working on for a year, and say, 'This sucks, I can't sell this'. It could be devastating."



» *The Atarians* boasted a voluptuous, wide-bodied playfield

DESERT ISLAND DISKS

WHAT CHERISHED GAMES WOULD YOU TAKE TO THE ISLAND?



» Eugene practising the 'Just Say No' hand-jive at the *NARC* launch



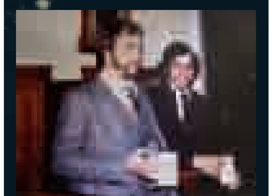
» Eugene accepted his lifetime achievement award from the International Game Developers Association wearing the same suit he wore for the *Defender* launch. Probably



» Wear the truth, courtesy of wayoftherodent.com

THE VID KIDS

"Larry DeMar is one of the smartest programmers I've ever known," enthuses Eugene of his partner at Vid Kidz, the independent software development house they founded after becoming disillusioned with working in-house at Williams. "He was an MIT graduate but a lot of graduates are too intellectual and can't really get down and do the practical stuff. He had the genius and could apply it to make a better mousetrap. Or videogame."
The pair had become friends after Larry had applied his talent and game nous to telling effect on the *Defender* project: "It was 10pm on the night before the show where we were going to premier *Defender*. Larry wanders in and says, 'Are you guys gonna have an attract mode?' We're, like, good idea! And Larry hacked one up there and then. An amazing guy."



» The Vid Kidz - Larry (right) and Eugene. The 24-hour coding regime led to the creation of these Special Edition Vid Kidz Coffee mugs

"I THOUGHT STARGATE WAS BETTER THAN DEFENDER, BUT I GUESS PEOPLE REMEMBER THEIR FIRST GIRLFRIEND, EVEN IF THEIR SECOND WAS HOTTER."
EUGENE JARVIS

Many have eulogised about *Robotron* and the word most often cited to describe its timeless appeal is 'balance'. Eugene offers his own inimitable critique: "You can take years making a game and only the last few weeks are spent on balancing. I think there are grades of difficulty from easy, to hard, to fucking impossible. With *Robotron*, we somehow expanded that area between ridiculously hard and f*cking impossible, which is normally a hair's breadth, and it's in that area that the amazing play is."

Eugene and Larry continued to push boundaries and these masters of the 2D shooter elected to make their next project embrace the third dimension. They both agreed this was where games were heading, but trying to realise their vision using *Robotron* hardware (their experiments with vector technology had proved fruitless) involved some labour-intensive artistry.

"With *Blaster*, we couldn't do the 3D scaling with the hardware, so we came up with a scaling algorithm and got artists to create, like, 32 images of something from tiny to huge. It was all done by hand and it was a pretty good game, but the timing was poor and it got caught up in the whole videogames crash."

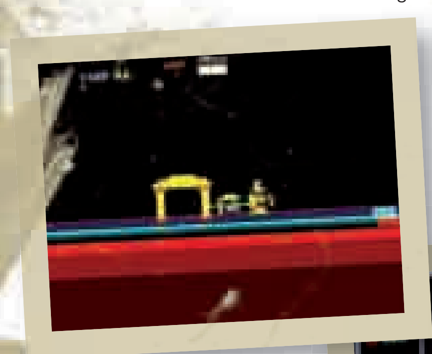
Eugene too fell victim to the industry implosion of the mid-Eighties and spent several years away from game design, studying Business and Computer Science at Stanford. He was lured back to Williams in 1987 when it emerged that the death of videogames had been greatly exaggerated and remained there until the end of the Nineties, working on a diverse range of titles that encompassed everything from sports sims to the *Cruisin' USA*, *World* and *Exotica* driving games. He wasn't afraid to tackle subjects normally seen as off-limits to game designers either, as demonstrated in his satirising of American game shows in *Smash TV* and the anti-drugs message of *NARC*.

"Why shouldn't games be based on politics? Sure, those games did have a certain tongue-in-cheek quality, but particularly with *NARC*, I did have really strong feelings regarding the devastating effect that drugs were having on society. But how do you make that cool? So I went for this whole '*Rambo* in the Hood' thing where you got to rocket the drug dealers… Games didn't only have to exist in *Mario* Land – they could be more than that."

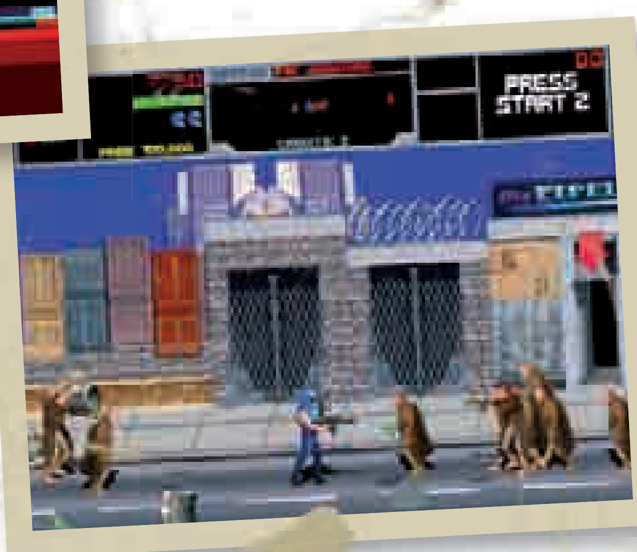
Eugene still believes games can matter. When things got intolerable at Midway, part of the Williams empire, in 2000, he was persuaded by younger colleagues to set up a new company, Raw Thrills, whose arcade output includes *The Fast And The Furious*, *Big Buck Hunter* and the forthcoming *SuperBikes* motorcycle simulator. His enthusiasm shows no signs of abating and the thought of being marooned with eight classic games poses an intriguing dilemma for a man who loves to play as much as he does create.

"I think I'd play each one solidly for a month," he muses. "Maybe I could finally crack a million on *Robotron*. Then I'd scoop out the electronics, use the cabinet as a dugout canoe and paddle for home!"

Ah, so that's why *Robotron* makes the perfect desert island game…

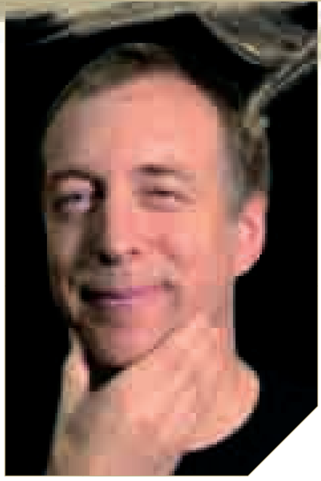


» **Above:** *Blaster*, only 1000 cabinets were made and the home version was killed during Atari's implosion. Shame





» **Right:** Digitised graphics and relentless, brutal action: *NARC* was a videogaming speedball… **Far right:** Eugene's final game for Midway, *Cruisin' Exotica*

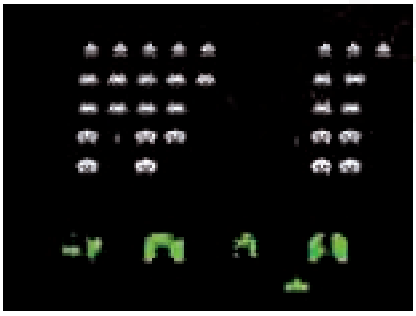


EUGENE JARVIS DESERT ISLAND DISKS



SPACE WARS ARCADE

1 With a well-trained monkey, I could have so much fun with this game. I do have a *Computer Space* cabinet in my basement, which I bought for $100 during the videogames crash. It's a wonderful piece of hardware – discrete diodes were used to store the images, so you can see the ships on the actual circuit boards – but the play value isn't as good as *Space Wars*.



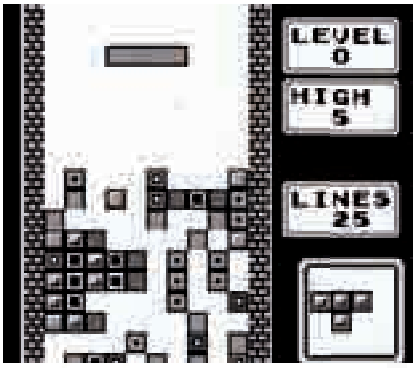
SPACE INVADERS ARCADE

2 It was my inspiration to become a programmer, so even though I think I'd get tired of it, I'd like it there. As stupid as those invaders were, it demonstrated that there could be some kind of intelligent enemy in a videogame. And it created that wave-based structure with things getting progressively harder and a finite amount of lives.



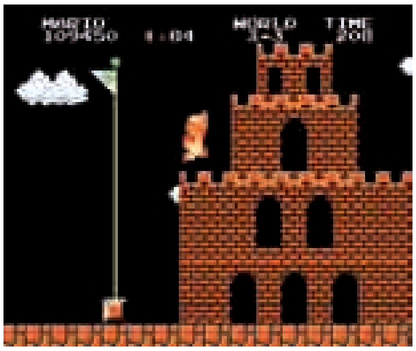
ROBOTRON ARCADE

3 *Robotron* is full immersion. Every muscle in your body and every brain cell is completely tapped. The twin joysticks get your left and right brain trying to work together and it gets pretty crazy. It's an intense game and can really give you a workout. You break sweat with *Robotron*. The aerobics factor could be useful on the island.



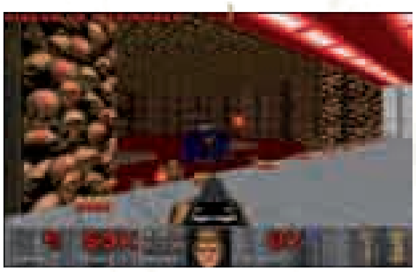
TETRIS GAMEBOY

4 I hate to say this as a designer with a big ego, but *Tetris* may be the most brilliant game ever made. So many games rely on graphics, but here the beauty is all in the game. It's that eternal struggle against garbage we all face – trying to keep your place clean. You always feel if you just got the right pieces, you could clean it all up. Perfect for those with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.



SUPER MARIO BROTHERS NES

5 The music, the coins, the silly little worlds, jumping up the towers, the princess… just amazing. You can play it for hours. Brilliant.



DOOM PC

6 *Wolfenstein* was great, but *Doom* became the definitive First-Person-Shooter. There's something about the audio and the visuals, the ominous feeling and the suspense… total immersion. An amazing game.



AGE OF EMPIRES 2 PC

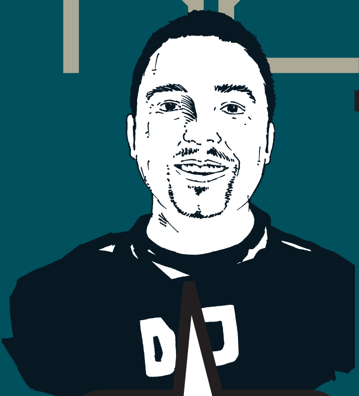
7 I got addicted several years ago. And still am. They seem to have combined all the elements of naval and land warfare with the resource management. It just felt like you were running your own country. I'm no good online – I'm still chopping wood when guys turn up with hundreds of troops.



WORLD OF WARCRAFT PC

8 I've always loved the mess of online gaming. I thought *Ultima* was interesting but felt too much like a discipline and *Everquest* was kind of like a graphical chatroom. *World Of Warcraft* has that action and playability, but you can get together with your buddies. Do you think the monkeys could learn?

RETRORATED



While the Lynx didn't feature a huge library of games, it did boast a dazzling array of puzzlers – perfect for those long bus journeys home from school. Join us as we take a look at some of the best (and most expensive) games that Atari's underrated system has to offer

KLAX

INFORMATION

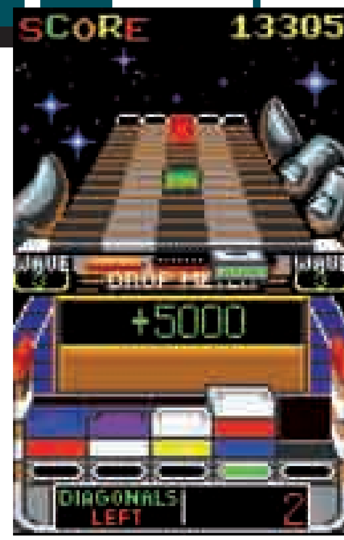
» **PUBLISHER:** ATARI
» **EXPECT TO PAY:** £5-£15
» **PLAYERS:** 1

Don't let the fact that you have to hold your handheld vertically put you off, as *Klax* is effectively the Lynx's *Tetris*, and whilst it's not quite as accessible as Pajitnov's classic, it remains fantastic fun to play and deserves pride of place in your Lynx collection.

While *Klax* appeared on a variety of different systems, the Lynx version remains one of our favourites and we still return to it every now and then. It features, sharp, crisp graphics, an impressive amount of digitised speech from one of the sexiest videogame voices we've ever heard and becomes fiendishly addictive on the later levels. All in all it's everything you'd expect from a puzzle game. Marvellous stuff.

OVERALL 93%

retro GAMER SIZZLER



» A superb arcade conversion that plays like a dream

CHIP'S CHALLENGE

INFORMATION

» **PUBLISHER:** ATARI
» **EXPECT TO PAY:** £4-£8
» **PLAYERS:** 1

Although *Chip's Challenge* can often be picked up for less than a fiver, don't let that put you off, as it's one of the best puzzle games the Lynx has to offer.

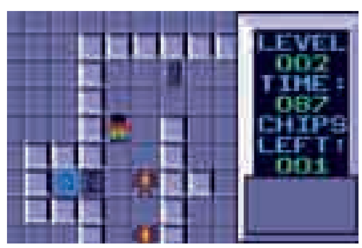
Each level (of which there are 144 in total) requires Chip to simply reach the exit and collect a required amount of chips. Easy, except that many of the chips are located in extremely hard-to-reach places and you have a timer that is constantly ticking away. As the game progresses, more and more new obstacles are introduced, until the later levels become hellishly difficult for you to master.

Don't be put off by *Chip's Challenge*'s dull looking visuals and monotonous tunes, as they hide one of the Lynx's best puzzlers. Its low price just adds to the charm. It's a bargain.

OVERALL 90%



» There's no battery save in *Chip's Challenge*, so be sure to write down those passwords



» Each level has a set amount of chips to collect; can you find them all?

retro GAMER SIZZLER



LEMMINGS

INFORMATION

» **PUBLISHER:** ATARI
» **EXPECT TO PAY:** £40 - £100
» **PLAYERS:** 1

***Lemmings* may be one of the most expensive Lynx titles available (we've seen it sell around the £100 mark on certain online sites) but it's one of Lynx's most impressive achievements.**

From its outstanding intro, to the last level, *Lemmings* oozes quality. The graphics are some of the best we've seen on Atari's handheld, with the lemmings being superbly animated and full of character. The controls are delightfully easy to pick up and easy to adapt to (especially if you've played any other console versions). Whilst it's a shame that there's no two-player mode included, the engaging single-player mode more than makes up for it. Yes it's horrendously expensive, but if you want the best the Lynx has to offer you'll have to pay the price.

OVERALL 90%

retro GAMER SIZZLER



» Special thanks must go to Atari Age for kindly supplying us with screenshots. Visit them at www.atariage.com



SHANGHAI

INFORMATION

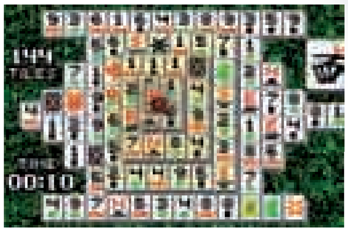
- **PUBLISHER:** ATARI
- **EXPECT TO PAY:** £5 - £10
- **PLAYERS:** 1-2

If you're bored of mindlessly blasting at aliens, or want to take a break from competing in hectic sports titles, then Activision's *Shanghai* is the perfect way for you to kick back and unwind.

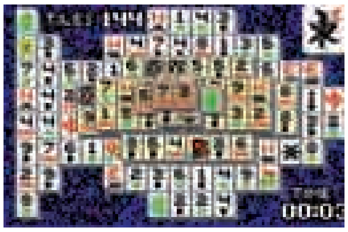
While *Shanghai* is ridiculously simple in execution (remove a pair of tiles, one set at a time), it quickly reveals itself to be a game of vast depth, with the player having to think many moves ahead in order to complete each stage.

The Lynx's large screen makes the game's many different titles extremely easy to identify and there's a great two-player option to add to Shanghai's longevity. Add in some extremely soothing music and you have the perfect game to accompany you on long journeys (providing of course you have a ridiculously large supply of batteries).

OVERALL 87%



» Matching titles has never been so much fun



» *Shanghai*'s tile displays are based on different animals

RAMPART

INFORMATION

- **PUBLISHER:** ATARI
- **EXPECT TO PAY:** £5 - £20
- **PLAYERS:** 1-2

Whilst it's not a patch on its arcade parent, the Lynx's conversion of *Rampart* remains a damn fine game and nicely straddles the puzzle/strategy genre.

The most obvious difference with the Lynx version is that it doesn't come with the trackball that featured in the arcade game; as a result, D-Pad manipulation is initially tricky to get to grips with. The other downside is that the third player hasn't been included (although the game itself plays perfectly with a second player). If you can get past these minor inconveniences you'll find building castles and repelling enemies as fun as it ever was. Throw in some well-detailed visuals and solid sound and *Rampart* is another winner.

OVERALL 82%



» Yes it looks simple, but *Rampart* features a great deal of depth and shouldn't be missed

CRYSTAL MINES 2

INFORMATION

- **PUBLISHER:** ATARI
- **EXPECT TO PAY:** £6 +
- **PLAYERS:** 1

Fans of *Boulder Dash* will instantly be at home with *Crystal Mines 2* as they feature near identical gameplay.

Taking control of a cute little robot you have to clear each mine of its many crystals before moving on to the next gem-filled stage. Predictable is probably the kindest thing to say about *Crystal Mines 2*; while it's not the worst puzzler we've played on Atari's handheld, it doesn't quite reach the lofty standards held by the likes of *Lemmings*, *Klax* or *Chip's Challenge*. It certainly looks the part, and features some catchy little tunes, but just doesn't seem to excite like many of the other featured games. Try before you buy.

OVERALL 69%

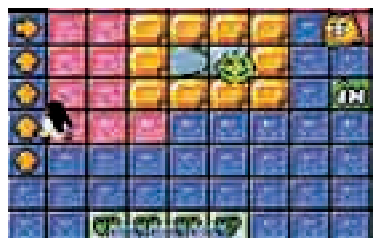


» While it can be picked up relatively cheaply, there are better Lynx games to choose from



» Fans of *Boulder Dash* may want to look but we've played far better clones

SUPER SKWEEK



» Bright, colourful visuals, a cheeky main character and a penguin. What more could you ask for?

INFORMATION

- **PUBLISHER:** ATARI
- **EXPECT TO PAY:** £5 - £15
- **PLAYERS:** 1-2

Third-party titles were rare on Atari's Lynx, so when they were as fun and as well polished as Loricel's *Super Skweek,* gamers usually stood up and took notice of them.

Like many of the games featured in this month's RetroRated, *Super Skweek* is wonderfully simple to play, but extremely difficult to master. Turning blue tiles pink by walking over them may sound like child's play, but when you add a variety of different tiles (that will often hinder, rather than help you) and some vicious meanies into the equation, your task soon becomes a hell of a lot trickier to complete.

Super Skweek excels thanks to its solid level design, vibrant visuals and great two-player mode. Make sure you pick it up today.

OVERALL 85%

RETRORATED

» THE BOOK COFFEE TABLES WERE MADE FOR

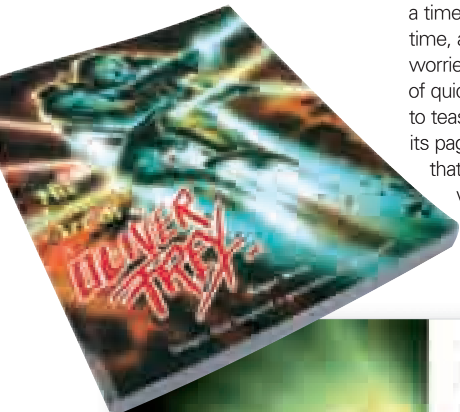
THE FANTASY ART OF OLIVER FREY

ART ATTACK

- » **PRICE:** £16.99
- » **RELEASED:** OUT NOW
- » **PUBLISHER:** THALAMUS PUBLISHING



Roger Kean's latest book about the unmistakable artwork of Oliver Frey is more than just a tome of exciting images. It's a portal, a time machine; it's a gateway to another time, a better time when we never had any worries, computer games only cost a couple of quid and girls were normally something to tease and not lust after. Flicking through its pages delivers a loving rush of nostalgia that vividly catapults you back to the time when the image in question once adorned the cover of Crash, Zzap!64, or the multitude of other magazines that Frey was actively involved in during the Eighties and Nineties. These are happy memories.



Frey's work has an energy and vibrancy that gives each piece of work an almost incandescent quality. Static drawings seemingly leap from the page, as if alive and the vitality captured within each image is remarkable. Frey uses a variety of different materials to create his work with and has drawn a wide variety of different genres (although it's his stunning fantasy and sci-fi drawings that most readers will remember) and they've all been lovingly restored for this new tome.

Whilst *The Fantasy Art Of Oliver Frey* is a glorious looking volume, it's somewhat disappointing that we're given little in-depth information about Frey himself. No one knows Frey better than Keane, yet the information on offer here is simple and to the point, almost workmanlike in its execution, and while Keane does include a fair few interesting and enjoyable anecdotes you can't help but want him to dig a little deeper and find out what makes the respected artist tick.

Of course, the upside to this approach is that it's been possible for Keane and Frey to devote the majority of this 194-page paperback to Frey's most respected and recognisable drawings, and while some of his more popular images are missing (Metro Force 1, in particular, springs to mind) plenty of original, unseen pieces have been added, adding real value to the collection, with the end result being nothing short of breath-taking. An essential purchase.



» Ah memories… them were the days…



IN SUMMARY

Frey's logos have constantly adorned the very best work that the industry has to offer, so it's perhaps fitting that a book dedicated to his own glorious art receives a similar accolade. A must for fans everywhere, or anyone who just loves a damn good piece of art.

RATING **90%**



OPINION

I consider myself blessed to have not only worked for both Roger and Oli while at Newsfield, but to have witnessed first hand Oli creating art for Crash and Zzap!64. As such, I can say that this man's talents must be supernatural. The depth of imagination within this body of work is utterly astounding and, collected together like this for the first time, demonstrates the sheer genius of Frey, as well as his defining influence within the computer games culture of the 80s and 90s.

Mark Kendrick





» Frey's art has a distinctive fantastical quality, as seen in these unique images

RETRORATED

» A SPECIAL BOX OF GEMS FROM SEGA

GUNSTAR HEROES TREASURE BOX

THE BEST THINGS ALWAYS COME IN THREES



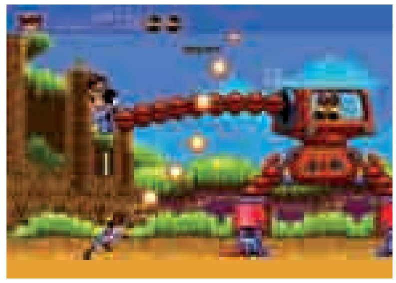
- » **SYSTEM:** PLAYSTATION2
- » **PRICE:** ¥3,389 (£16.63)
- » **RELEASED:** JAPAN (OUT NOW)
- » **PUBLISHER:** SEGA
- » **DEVELOPER:** TREASURE
- » **PLAYERS:** 1-2
- » **FEATURED GAMES:** GUNSTAR HEROES, ALIEN SOLDIER, DYNAMITE HEADDY



Okay, first we'll get the bad news out of the way. This isn't the fabled 'Treasure Box' that was rumoured to appear on Sega's Dreamcast. Tears wiped? Good, as Treasure Box is still a must buy for fans.

It may only include three games, but when they're three of the finest Mega Drive titles money can buy, it's hard to be upset, especially as its been released at a great price (websites like Playasia.com sell it for less than £17).

Gunstar Heroes is obviously the jewel in the collection and you'll be pleased to hear that it remains as fresh as ever (and still as hard as a head butt from an angry Glaswegian). Then, of course, there's *Alien Soldier*, probably one of the toughest shooters we've ever played. Like it's two bedfellows, *Alien Soldier* still manages to drop jaws thanks to Treasure's fantastic attention to detail and amazing mastery of the Mega Drive's hardware. It's easily the most impressive game available from a technical point of view, but some gamers may find it a little too tough to cope with. *Dynamite Headdy*, on the other hand, scales back the action but still manages to deliver an utterly charming adventure that's sure to delight platform fans.



» So much going on… How did Treasure do it?

So why choose Treasure Box over the original Mega Drive versions? Easy. Like its recent *Space Harrier Collection*, Sega has filled Treasure Box with a staggering amount of configurable options. Display can be Interlace, Non-Interlace, Progressive Scan (480 only) and Progressive Scan with Scan Lines. Texture Mapping can be standard or smooth and it's even possible to turn all the flickering off (even Treasure game's suffered from the odd bit of flicker). The end result is three classic games as you've never seen them before, and we'd take this option over a duff-looking remake any day of the week. Throw in the ability to record your own games, watch Super Plays of *Gunstar Heroes* and *Alien Soldier*, the ability to switch between English and Japanese, and plenty of lush artwork and you have yet another winner from Sega's new range.



» It's probably one of the toughest games you'll ever play, and that's just on Super Easy mode…

IN SUMMARY

Okay, so we admit it, there are only three (admittedly superb) games are available, but this wonderful collection's dazzling array of options more than adequately makes up for the lack of titles. If you have access to a chipped or Japanese PS2 then Treasure Box is essential.

RATING **83%**



OPINION

Christ, I'd forgotten how hard all these games actually were. I've been struggling for ages to get past the first few stages of *Gunstar* and *Headdy* (I too find *Soldier* impossible) but I can't stop playing it. The games look wonderful (especially in Progressive Scan) and there are plenty of secrets to uncover, which will keep fans more than happy. Yes, I'd have liked more games, but this is still a must buy.

Damian Butt



» While it won't cause you as many problems as *Alien Soldier* and *Gunstar Heroes*, *Dynamite Headdy* still has its moments



OPINION

Well, it would have been nice if a few extra games had been included, but you can't deny that *Treasure Box* features a trio of fantastic titles. *Gunstar Heroes* remains a firm favourite and I'm a huge fan of *Dynamite Headdy* (sadly, *Alien Soldier* is far too tough for me). The amount of options also shows that Sega has done its homework and delivered the sort of pack that fans really want, roll on *Panzer Dragoon*.

Simon Phillips

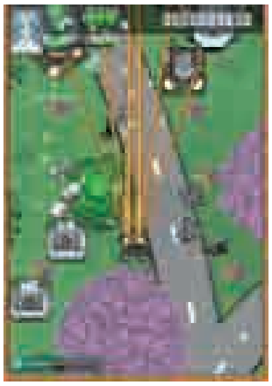




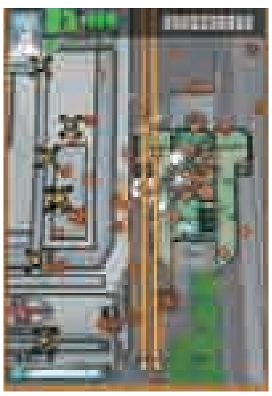
» APPROACHING A MILESTONE

RADIRGY

WAR IS CEL



- » **SYSTEM:** DREAMCAST
- » **PRICE:** 7,011 YEN (£34.79)
- » **RELEASED:** OUT NOW
- » **PUBLISHER:** MILESTONE
- » **DEVELOPER:** MILESTONE
- » **PLAYERS:** 1



» It's initially off-putting but you'll soon learn to love *Radirgy's* distinct look



With the incoming *Under Defeat* alleged to be the last officially printed GD-ROM game for Sega's Dreamcast, it's down to Milestone's recently released *Radirgy* to pass our time as we wait for G.Rev's next release.

Milestone's latest blaster is quite misleading, as it initially comes across as fairly uninspiring. The gameplay appears basic, the visuals seem at odds with the frenetic gameplay, and the *Wario Ware*-styled music feels like it's been tacked on as an afterthought. Stick with *Radirgy* though and everything starts to fall into place, and while it's not going to worry the likes of *Ikaruga* or *Psyvariar 2*, it's an improvement on Milestone's previous Dreamcast blaster.



» It's bad enough facing off against a boss, but when you have to deal with lesser enemies as well things get very tricky



Upon starting each game you'll have access to three different types of ships. One fires bullets, another uses bubbles, while the third utilises a lock-on laser; each craft also has three different speeds (although sadly these can't be changed in-game). Finally, every ship has access to a nifty little sword and a bullet-sucking shield, which has to be recharged after each use.



OPINION

I can't say I'm that much of a fan of *Radirgy's* cute visuals, but there's no denying it features some solid gameplay. The shield system and sword are extremely easy to use, and you're soon able to feel your way around *Radirgy's* excellent scoring system. My biggest annoyances are that the music isn't a patch on *Chaos Field's* (Milestone's last DC shooter) and that there's no two-player option. Other than that *Radirgy* is spot on.

Simon Phillips



OPINION

We've had seemingly dozens of shooters released since the Dreamcast 'officially' died, and while it's no *Ikaruga* or *Border Down*, *Radirgy* remains a great addition to your library. The kooky visuals are filled with character and give *Radirgy* a unique look that makes it stand apart from its many peers. Whilst it nicks elements from plenty of other great shooters, Milestone has managed to perfectly blend them together. The end result is yet another must-have shooter. Roll on *Under Defeat*.

Damian Butt

A shoot-'em-up's longevity often lives and dies by its score mechanic, so it's great to see that *Radirgy's* is so well-implemented. A multiplier bar appears in the top left corner of the screen and gets filled by either destroying enemies, dispensing certain bullets with your sword, collecting certain power-ups or simply using your shield to absorb any nearby bullets, which will then fill up the bar. The more the bar is filled, the higher your multiplier rises (up to a maximum of x16). Because the bar is constantly dropping it takes plenty of skill to ensure the multipliers are kept nice and high.

Radirgy isn't the most spectacular shooter the Dreamcast has ever seen, but what it does, it does very well. The scoring system is great, the level design is spot on and its sharp, cel-shaded visuals give it a very unique look. Yet another late DC game to add to the collection.

IN SUMMARY

Whilst not the greatest shooter we've ever played, Milestone's *Radirgy* remains a fun shoot-'em-up that will certainly hold your attention thanks to its abstract look and strong gameplay mechanics. Pick it up today.

RATING **80%**

eMag

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE

ACT ALL MACHO



- **PUBLISHER:** NIHON BUSSAN/AV JAPAN
- **RELEASED:** 1989
- **GENRE:** RUN 'N GUN
- **FEATURED HARDWARE:** ARCADE
- **EXPECT TO PAY:** £80+



HISTORY

When I spotted *Midnight Resistance* in the local arcade, I was overwhelmed. There was no doubt it looked great - chunky colourful sprites, lots of explosions and much jumping around while spitting lead. Brilliant.

Created by Data East and a sequel to the 1987 game *Heavy Barrel*, *Midnight Resistance* was initially difficult to get to grips with - often because the person playing the game before you would have perspired so much, the joystick would be soaked.

But my entire family was at stake, having been captured by a ruthless international gang of terrorists and what better excuse to don a Rambo-style headband, persevere and shoot the enemy down?

The various weirdos coming my way were perfect fodder as I spent my time jumping through the air to spit lead a full 360 degrees, before coolly crashing to the ground to crawl along the floor and shoot at whatever was below me.

Running forward, guns blazing, tilting the gun to blast anything behind me - I was in my element, defeating the foot soldiers and overcoming the heavy artillery, buying better guns in the weapons store.

There was hardly a moment's peace. When I decided to stop for a breather, a cross-hair appeared. It moved towards me, and bang! A life lost. I didn't repeat that mistake twice.

This game was so cool, it was featured in the movie, *Robocop 2*. But it wasn't all about violence - the US version apparently had a message which screamed "Winners Don't Use Drugs". This game had morals!

I was therefore ecstatic when this eight-way game was converted to the Amstrad CPC by those Liverpudlians over at Special F/X, but there was disappointment. Most games on the CPC had a border but *Midnight Resistance* was taking the mickey - the action was slow and was squeezed into a small sized box in the centre of the screen. Bah!

But that arcade version... Lovely!





BARGAIN HUNT

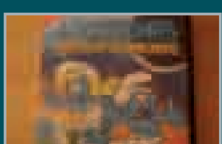
HUNT DOWN BARGAINS OR JUST DRINK UP THE LOVELINESS OF ALL THIS RETRO GOODNESS. FEAST YOUR EYES ON SIX PAGES OF THE VERY BEST THAT RETRO GAMING HAS TO OFFER…

Collecting retro games can be great fun, but you need to have a rough idea how much it's going to cost you. So here for your buying pleasure is Retro Gamer's buyer's guide. Where possible we have endeavoured to list the earliest international launch date, be it Asia, America or Europe. Prices were compiled from a variety of sources, including eBay, Japan auctions, car-boot sales, traders and general consensus. Foreign items will often be cheaper in their local country, so regional differences should be considered. Also, bear in mind that online items will often be cheaper than you will find in specialist stores. If you see an item selling for far less, good for you! We aim to help with finding those bargains, but if you see an item sold for much higher make sure you really want to purchase it. Prices fluctuate and the market sways, so there can never be a concrete listing. Bear in mind that something is worth as much as someone else is willing to pay. No one is perfect though, and we will openly admit that with over 100 different systems to list, mistakes can happen. If you spot a glaring error in our listings, please drop us an email at retrogamer@imagine-publishing.co.uk and let us know about it!

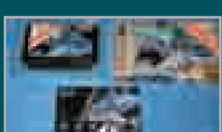
RETRO AUCTION WATCH

Retro Gamer will be sifting through countless pages of eBay and reporting on any items of interest (hardware and software) that have caught our eye. If something has sold for a staggeringly high amount of money (or lower than it normally would) you'll find them listed here.

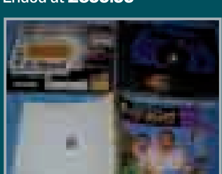
LES SCHTROUMPFS AUTOUR DU MONDE
(Smurfs 2)
Master System
Normally sells for **£260+**
Ended at **£399.99**



GRADIUS ACHIMENDES
(competition prize)
Famicom
Normally sells for **£300+**
Ended at **£450**



DELISOBA DELUXE
Saturn
Normally sells for **£250**
Ended at **£399.99**



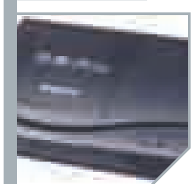
3DO



3DO GOLDSTAR
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£45 - £60**

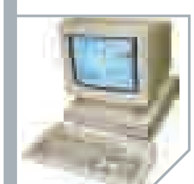


PANASONIC FZ-1 (FRONT LOADER)
» YEAR **1993**
» » RARITY
» PRICE **£40 - £60**

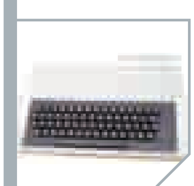


PANASONIC FZ-10 (TOP LOADER)
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 - £35**
While 3DO systems had much potential, there wasn't enough software support and it eventually stopped production. There were still some great games released!
- STAR CONTROL 2
- RETURN FIRE
- CRASH AND BURN

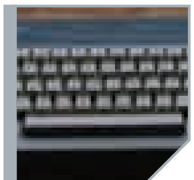
ACORN



ARCHIMEDES
» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 (with games)**
Early RISC-based home computer, quite powerful at the time.
- VIRUS (STRIPPED DOWN VERSION OF ZARCH)



ATOM
» YEAR **1980**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50**
Extremely old home computer by Acorn that's now hard to find.



ACORN ELECTRON
» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**
Budget version of the BBC home computer (below).



BBC MICRO
» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15**
A classic British home computer, and quite popular. Affectionately known as 'the Beeb'.
- EXILE
- ELITE
- WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST

AMSTRAD



CPC 464
» YEAR **1984**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 - £25**
Early classic 8-bit home computer from Amstrad, designed to compete against the C64 and ZX Spectrum. This early model has a built in cassette tape deck. Beware the models that come with a green screen monitor!



CPC 664
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 - £25**
Like the 464, except with a floppy disk drive. A short-lived model that was soon replaced by the superior 6128.



CPC 6128
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25+**
Improved model which doubled the RAM of previous iterations. Later 'Plus' models came with a cartridge port.
- RENEGADE
- RICK DANGEROUS
- GRYZOR



GX4000
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50-£70**
Console version of the CPC Plus range, came with joypads. Limited range of games.
- BURNIN' RUBBER
- PANG
- SWITCHBLADE

APPLE

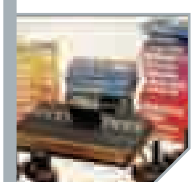


APPLE II
» YEAR **1977**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30+ (with games)**
Like many early computers the Apple II was hand-built machine and sold to enthusiasts.
- KARATEKA
- ULTIMA IV
- LODE RUNNER

ATARI



400/800/600XL/XE
» YEAR **1979**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20+**
Series of old 8-bit Atari home computers.
- DROP ZONE
- THRUST
- ZYBEX



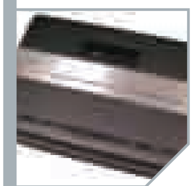
2600 (VCS)
» YEAR **1977**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 - £30**
Earliest console by Atari. Various models, many with the classic wood panelling effect. Many UK gamers had their first taste of videogames on this.
- PITFALL
- ADVENTURE
- COSMIC ARK

RARITY GUIDE

ROCKING HORSE SHIT
HEN'S TEETH
LUCKY FIND
EBAY REGULAR
CAR BOOT SALE BARGAIN



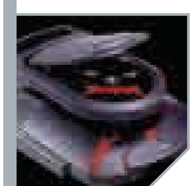
5200
» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30**
Unpopular successor to the 2600, regarded as an Atari 400 without a keyboard.
- RESCUE ON FRACTALUS
- DIG DUG
- ZAXXON



7800
» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 - £40**
Handily, Atari made the 7800 backwards compatible with the ever popular 2600.
- KARATEKA
- CHOPLIFTER
- WINTER GAMES



JAGUAR
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**
Failed attempt to beat the PlayStation and Saturn in the console race. Few decent games. But it does have Jeff Minter's *Tempest*!
- TEMPEST 2000
- ALIEN VS PREDATOR
- BATTLESPHERE (RARE AND EXPENSIVE!)



JAGUAR CD
» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£70**
Rare and overpriced CD add-on for the Jaguar. Very few games, but it does look very much like a toilet seat!
- BATTLEMORPH CD
- HIGHLANDER CD
- TEMPEST 2000 MUSIC CD

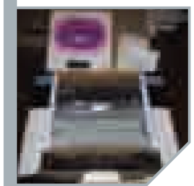


LYNX I/II (2ND IS SMALLER)
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15**
Powerful handheld from Atari that failed due to poor marketing and battery life.
- BLUE LIGHTNING
- CALIFORNIA GAMES
- DIRTY LARRY RENEGADE COP



ST
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 depending on model**
Atari home computer and a big rival to the Amiga. There are many different models of various specifications.
- DUNGEON MASTER
- POPULOUS
- DAMOCLES

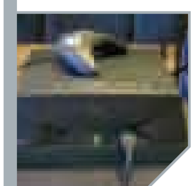
BANDAI



GUNDAM RX-78 COMPUTER
» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£75 (prices fluctuate wildly)**
Ultra rare, early Japanese games computer by Bandai. Aimed at both gamers and anime fans. Expect to pay a much higher price for a machine that's in mint condition.



PLAYDIA
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£90 and upwards according to eBay**
Bizarre Japan-only console, apparently made for kids.
- SAILOR MOON
- ULTRAMAN
- DRAGON BALL Z



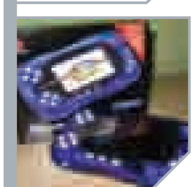
PIPPIN(ATMARK)
» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx £500+**
A strange hybrid system from Bandai and Apple. Very expensive and with very few games available. It's high price means that it's normally only sought after by collectors.
- RACING DAYS
- DRAGON BALL Z
- GUNDAM TACTICS



WONDERSWAN (B/W)
» YEAR **1999**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**



WONDERSWAN COLOR
» YEAR **1999**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**



WONDERSWAN CRYSTAL
» YEAR **2000**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25**
Handheld system by Bandai, fairly popular. Can now be bought very cheaply, especially in Japan. Be sure to buy the SwanCrystal, which is basically an improved 'Color' model. Both colourised models can run B/W WS games.
- GUNPEY EX
- SWAN COLOSSEUM
- JUDGEMENT SILVERSWORD

COMMODORE



AMIGA500/600/1200
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 (more with games, depending on model)**
Classic and incredibly popular 16-bit home computer by Commodore, that was designed to compete against the Atari ST range. Vast array of different models, with differing specs, the Amiga 500 (with a RAM upgrade) is a particular favourite with many gamers.
- SPEEDBALL 2: BRUTAL DELUXE
- LEMMINGS
- SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER



C16/PLUS 4
» YEAR **1984**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15 - £30**
The less well known sibling of the C64, but without the compatibility of its peers.
- TUTTI FRUTTI
- MONTY ON THE RUN
- KIKSTART



C64
» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 - £30**
One of the best selling 8-bit home computers of all time. Competed against the Spectrum and Amstrad home computers. Featured the wonderful SID sound chip that was put to amazing use by the likes of Ben Daglish and Rob Hubbard.
- WIZBALL
- MAYHEM IN MONSTERLAND
- PARADROID



C64 GS (GAMES SYSTEM)
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx £30**
Commodore's cartridge-based machine that tried to take on both Nintendo and Sega. Sadly failed due to a lack of support from most publishers.
- PANG
- NAVY SEALS
- BATTLE COMMAND

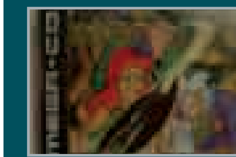


C128
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 - £50**
Three machines (CPM, C64 and C128) in one box. Specialised software is relatively small in number.

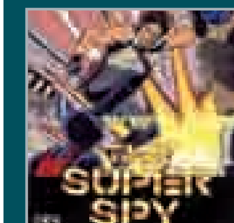


CDTV
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**
Commodore aimed for the 'every home should have one' market and missed by a country

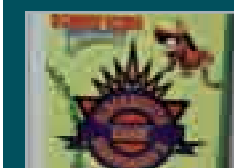
BAT MAN & ROBIN
Mega CD
Normally sells for **£80+**
Ended at **£300**



THE SUPER SPY (Carton Box)
Neo Geo
Normally sells for **£200**
Ended at **£62.00**



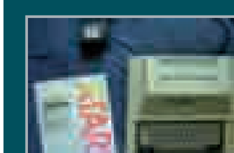
DONKEY KONG COUNTRY
Blockbuster Competition Cartridge
SNES
Normally sells for **£270**
Ended at **£444.98**



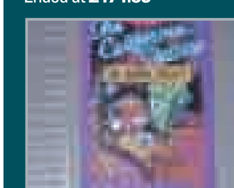
ALIEN VS PREDATOR
Atari Jaguar
Normally sells for **£40+**
Ended at **£20.02**



ATARI 400
(Boxed)
Normally sells for **£20+**
Ended at **£55.15**



CALIFORNIA RAISINS – THE GRAPE ESCAPE
NES
Normally sells for **£100 +**
Ended at **£174.59**



mile. A curious mixture of games and educational material.



CD32
» YEAR **1992**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25**
CD-based console that followed on from the experimental CDTV. Sometimes described as a consolised Amiga 1200 with CD drive. Despite featuring some extremely impressive games, the majority failed to improve on their 500 and 1200 counterparts.
- EXILE
- SIMON THE SORCERER
- ALIEN BREED 3D



VIC-20
» YEAR **1980**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 - £30 depending on condition/extras**
The computer that established Commodore brand.
- HELLGATE
- SERPENTINE
- SUPER SMASH

FUJITSU



FUJITSU FM COMPUTERS
» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100+**
Early Nineties home computers by Fujitsu, which could read CDs.



FUJITSU FM TOWNS MARTY
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£200+**
A legendary console, which contains both a CD and disk drive. Based on Fujitsu's old FM Towns computers, and mostly backwards compatible with the majority of games. Very expensive, (especially if you find a machine in mint condition), but with a lot of chic!
- ZAK MC KRAKEN
- TATSUJIN OU
- SCAVENGER 4

MISCELLANEOUS



BALLY ASTROCADE
» YEAR **1978**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**
Early videogame system that used interchangeable cartridges, developed by the Bally games division at Midway Games.
- GATE ESCAPE
- ICBM ATTACK
- TREASURE COVE



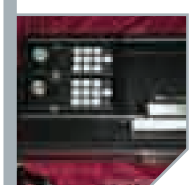
BARCODE BATTLER
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£5**
Handheld LCD game, where you must swipe barcoded cards (or barcodes taken from soup packets!) to gather stats, and then battle against someone else who swiped barcodes. We're not making this up…
–Razzle 214
– Diet Coke with Lime 500ml
– Heinz Ravioli 410g



CASIO LOOPY
» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25**
More inanity from the land of the rising sun. This is a console designed especially for female gamers and it even allows stickers to be printed out… Casio hoped it would do better than their failed PV-1000 console released in 1983.



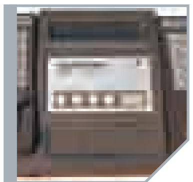
FAIRCHILD CHANNEL F
» YEAR **1976**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 (from the USA)**
The first commercially released console that used programmable cartridges. A real piece of history. Despite this, it's surprisingly cheap to purchase (although importing from the US may cost a fair amount).



COLECOVISION
» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 standalone**
Coleco's third generation videogame system. Quite a few decent games, and considering its age it's a fairly powerful machine. Many of its arcade conversions were considered superior to the other systems on the market.
-CONGO BONGO
- SMURPH RESCUE
- CABBAGE PATCH KIDS



DRAGON 32/64
» YEAR **1982/3**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£8 (very cheap on eBay)**
Early British home computer that tried to cash in on the early Eighties boom. Short-lived though quite popular. The 64 model was released roughly a year after the 32.
- GRID RUNNER
- DEVIL ASSAULT
- CAVE FIGHTER



ARCADIA 2001
» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**
Failed console by Emmerson, which had numerous different clones released as well.
- FUNKY FISH
- JUNGLER
- ROBOT ATTACK



EPOCH CASSETTE VISION
» YEAR **1981**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**
Obscure early Japanese console, which in 1983 had a budget 'Junior' model released.



EPOCH SUPER CASSETTE VISION
» YEAR **1984**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30**
Epoch's successor to the Cassette Vision, which was also marketed in Europe under the Yeno label. Apparently it only had around 30 games released for it.



INTELLIVISION
» YEAR **1980**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£40 upwards depending on extras**
Developed by Mattel, the system was revolutionary. It was the first console to be technically 16-bit, go online (to download games), and it featured voice synthesis. Today it still has a strong retro following.
- FROG BOG
- ARMOR BATTLE
- LOCK 'N' CHASE



ODYSSEY
» YEAR **1972**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**
The original home videogame console, even before Atari got in on the act! Created by Ralph Baer, this is the ultimate piece of gaming history. Fortunately, it can be purchased relatively cheaply.



PLAYSTATION
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 depending on condition/model**
Another attempt by Sony to enter the videogame hardware market (after the MSX), this time they took over the market. There are countless undocumented yet excellent PS games. Was later re-released as the PSOne, which is more expensive, but looks much nicer in design.
- CASTLEVANIA: SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT
- FINAL FANTASY VII
- RIDGE RACER



SAM COUPE
» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 - £200 (allegedly for a mint complete system)**
Originally developed by Miles Gordon Technology in Swansea, the Sam Coupe was a unique 8-bit British home computer which didn't fare very well. It could even emulate the 48K Speccy to a degree.
- DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH
- ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE ROBOT MONSTERS
- PRINCE OF PERSIA



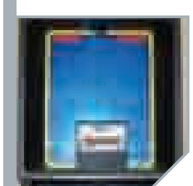
SUPERVISION
» YEAR **1992**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15**
Marketed by several different companies, this was essentially a cut-price competitor to the monochrome Game Boy. Unsurprisingly, it was not manufactured for very long and is now hard to find.
- ALIEN
- HONEY BEE
- POLICE BUST



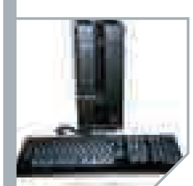
TIGER ELEC. GAME.COM
» YEAR **1997**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15**
Attempt by Tiger Electronics to compete against the Game Boy.
- RESIDENT EVIL 2
- SONIC JAM
- DUKE NUKEM 3D



TOMY TUTOR (MK1/JR/MK2)
» YEAR **1983/4**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**
Series of old computers by Tomy.



VECTREX (MB/GCE)
» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80**
The only home system ever to come with a vector display, enabling true vector graphics.
- SPACE WAR
- SPINBALL
- HYPERCHASE



X68000
» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£90 upwards**
Home computer by Sharp, released only in Japan. Famous for its arcade ports.
- CASTLEVANIA CHRONICLES
- STREET FIGHTER 2
- FINAL FIGHT

MSX



MSX 1

» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 - £30**

An early attempt to create a standard gaming platform, fairly common in the UK.

- PENGUIN ADVENTURE
- KNIGHTMARE
- THE GOONIES

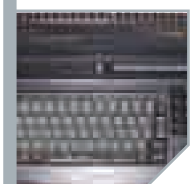


MSX 2

» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 - £50**

Updated and more powerful version of the MSX, very popular in Holland and Brazil where even today some excellent homebrew games are developed.

- METAL GEAR 2
- ALESTE 2
- VAMPIRE KILLER



MSX 2+

» YEAR **1988**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 - £50**

Another hardware update that proved to be very popular in Holland.

- SPACE MANBOW
- GOLVELLIUS 2
- F1 SPIRIT 3D SPECIAL



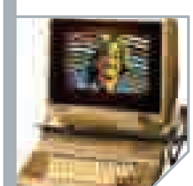
MSX TURBO R

» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 - £90**

A final and not very popular hardware update, that was virtually exclusive to Japan.

- FRAY
- PRINCESS MAKER
- ILLUSION CITY

NEC



PC-6### (ALSO MK II)

» YEAR **1984 onwards**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10-£50 depending on model**

Quite old 6000 series of home computers by NEC, with a lot of very cool Japanese games for it. Released in the USA as the NEC Trek. While fairly cheap, be careful of shipping prices.



PC-8801

» YEAR **1981 onwards**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 (cheap on Yahoo! Japan)**

Old computer series by NEC, with several different models over the years. Has a massive roster of cool games, including the original *Silpheed*. While very cheap to buy online from Japan, shipping is expensive.



PC-9801

» YEAR **1983 onwards**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35 (cheap on Yahoo! Japan)**

Another home computer series by NEC, again with many great games. Laptop versions also exist. Most games by Falcom are worth watching out for.



PCFX

» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 prices can fluctuate**

32-bit tower console by NEC, resembles a PC. Released in Japan only, had software support until 1998. Only a few action titles. Apparently, it also had quite a bit of hentai on it.

- LAST IMPERIAL PRINCE
- CHOUJIN HEIKI ZEROIGAR (SHMUP)
- ZENKI FX (FIGHTER)



PC-ENGINE

» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£55**

Classic piece of Japanese hardware from NEC which features many excellent arcade ports and a few exclusives. The CoreGrafx system is basically a PC-Engine with AV output.



PC-ENGINE GT

» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£70 depending on extras**

Portable handheld version of the Japanese PC-Engine that played all Japanese Hu-Cards.



TURBO GRAFX-16

» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 (can be found quite cheap)**

American version of the PC-Engine. It has territory lockout, so the two system's Hu-Cards are not mutually compatible.



TURBO EXPRESS

» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 (massive fluctuations)**

Portable handheld version of the American Turbo Grafx-16.

- BONK/PC KID SERIES
- BLOODY WOLF
- NINJA SPIRIT



SUPER GRAFX

» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80 (prices can fluctuate)**

Meant to be the successor to the original PC-Engine, but sadly failed due to lack of games. It is backwards compatible, but only had 6 games specifically released for it.

- ALDYNES
- DARIUS PLUS
- GHOULS AND GHOSTS



PCE CD-ROM/ TURBO GRAFX CD

» YEAR **1988**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 upwards**

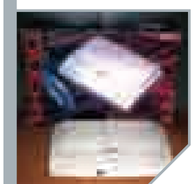
CD-ROM add-on for the PCE and TG16, released in 1988 and 1989. It has no region lockout.



PCE DUO/TURBO DUO

» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£120**

System that combines the PCE/TG16 with its CD add-on. Released in both Japan and America in 1991 and 1992. The CD games still have no region lockout.



DUO-R

» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80**

Stripped down white version of the PCE Duo, without headphone port. Later in 1994 a Duo-RX version was released, slightly blue in colour and came with a 6 button control pad.

- DRACULA X
- SHUBIBINMAN 3
- LORDS OF THUNDER

NINTENDO



FAMICOM

» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£60**

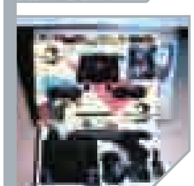
Nintendo's first foray into the home console market, with over a 1000 games to choose from!



FAMICOM AV

» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£40**

A cheaper remodelled version of the Famicom, now with AV output.



FAMICLONE

» YEAR **N/A**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**

Mass-produced pirate versions of the Famicom system. Virtually infinite different designs.

- CRISIS FORCE
- SWEET HOME
- HAUNG DI



FAMICOM DISK SYSTEM

» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£70**

Nintendo's attempt to bring cheap rewritable disk-based gaming to the masses. Be warned, the drive belts break very easily.

RETRO GAMING SITES

RADIO SEGA

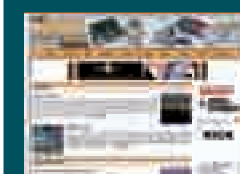
If your life isn't complete unless you're listening to classic Sega tunes 24 hours a day then head over to Radio Sega, like yesterday. Mark Kidley's superb site features over a 1,000 classic tunes from titles ranging from *Streets Of Rage 2* to *Panzer Dragoon* and the impressive archive shows no sign of slowing down. Essential. **http://radio.mysega.co.uk**



THE MEAN MACHINES ARCHIVE

Slowly, but ever so surely The Mean Machines Archive is turning into one of the greatest fansites on the Internet, and it's got nothing to do with the fact that we're mentioned on the front page…

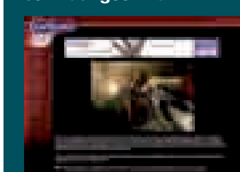
All the Mean Machines team have now been interviewed and archived scans of the fantastic magazine are growing at an alarming rate. Highly recommended. **http://www.meanmachinesmag.co.uk/**

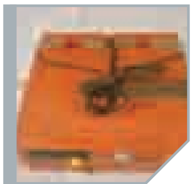


THE CASTLEVANIA DUNGEON

Every fan of Konami's classic vampire slaying franchise should visit The Castlevania Dungeon at least once in their lives (preferably with a whip and pointed stake).

There's a staggering amount of info about the revered series and oodles of art, screenshots and reviews. A wonderful resource site you can really sink your teeth into… **http://castlevania.classicgaming.gamespy.com/dungeon.html**





SHARP FAMICOM TWIN
» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100**
Combined Famicom and Disk System, by Sharp. Comes in two colours, black and pink.
- OTOCKY
- NAZO NO MURASAMEJOU
- PATLABOR



GAME&WATCH
» YEAR **1980-1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£1 - £200**
Series of handheld LCD games that were created by the legendary Gunpei Yoko.



GAME BOY B/W
» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£5**
Nintendo's original handheld portable, with interchangeable cartridges. Despite it's age, and monochrome display, there are many excellent classic GB games.



GAME BOY POCKET
» YEAR **1996**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£8**
A smaller and more compact GB, with improved screen. A Japanese version with built-in light was released and sells for a much higher price.
- SUPER MARIO LAND
- TETRIS
- POKÉMON



GAME BOY COLOR
» YEAR **1998**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£12**
Colour-based version of the classic GB. Backwards compatible, but it also has several exclusive games that were rather special.
- METAL GEAR SOLID: GHOST BABEL
- RESIDENT EVIL GAIDEN
- HARVEST MOON 3



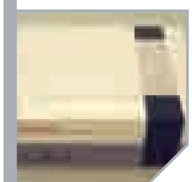
GAME BOY ADVANCE
» YEAR **2001**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25**



N64
» YEAR **1996**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**
Nintendo's last cartridge based console, competitor to the PlayStation and Saturn. Has several highly sought after classics. Some games (like *Donkey Kong*) require the RAM expansion pack and wouldn't run without it.
- SIN & PUNISHMENT
- PILOTWINGS 64
- BLAST CORPS



N64 DD
» YEAR **1999**
»» RARITY
» PRICE **£150 and upwards!**
Another attempt by Nintendo to incorporate disc media with one of their cartridge-based consoles. Expensive and very few games were released.
- F-ZERO EXPANSION KIT
- MARIO ARTIST SERIES
- DOSHIN THE GIANT



NES (TOASTER)
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15**
The Western version of the Famicom, popular the world over. Plenty of great Nintendo classics to choose from, and very cheap too.



NES (DOG BONE)
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50**
Remodelled and improved version of the traditional NES. Region lockout was also removed, meaning all 72 pin based NES games work.
- VICE: PROJECT DOOM
- SNAKE'S REVENGE
- SUPER MARIO BROS. 3



SNES (SUPER FAMICOM IN JAPAN)
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**
Nintendo's successor to the NES, and one of their most popular machines. A retro staple with a fantastic selection of games.



SNES 2 (KNOWN AS 'JR' IN JPN)
» YEAR **1997**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 - £100**
Cheaper and redesigned SNES.
- SUPER METROID
- SECRET OF MANA
- SUPER MARIO WORLD



VIRTUAL BOY
» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80**
Nintendo's failed attempt at a pseudo Virtual Reality games system. Quite a novelty as there is nothing else like it. Be warned though, as many gamers have complained that the machine gives them headaches – never a good thing.
- INSMOUSE NO YAKATA (HP LOVECRAFT INSPIRED FPS)
- WARIO LAND
- RED ALARM

PHILIPS



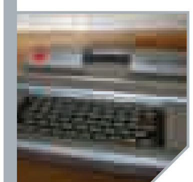
CD-I 205/210/220
» YEAR **from1992**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 (more with Digital Video Card)**
Unique system by Philips.The 200 series consists of front loading systems, with each one having slightly different specifications.



CD-I 450/490/740
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 (more with DVC)**
Consolised version of previous models, requires a different '9956' DVC.
- THE APPRENTICE
- BURN CYCLE
- HOTEL MARIO



VIDEOPAC G7000
» YEAR **1978**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**
Popular across the world (especially Brazil and Holland) and known also as the 'Odyssey 2'.



VIDEOPAC G7400
» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**
A successor to the G7000, that was backwards compatible.
- QUEST FOR RINGS
- PICKAXE PETE
- MUNCHKIN

SEGA



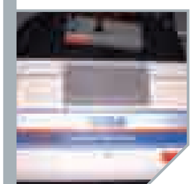
32X
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35 (must have RF + Mains)**
Failed Mega Drive add-on, designed to enhance it's capabilities.
- KNUCKLES CHAOTIX
- KOLIBRI
- DARXIDE



DREAMCAST
» YEAR **1999**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25 depending on extras**
Sega's final hardware release. No gamer should be without it. Amazing official roster of games, plus it can emulate older systems.
- IKARUGA
- CRAZY TAXI
- REZ



GAME GEAR
» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15 more with extras**
Handheld by Sega, designed to compete against the Game Boy. Low battery life, but effectively a portable Master System. Could also be used as a TV (as shown here).
- SHINOBI 2
- COLUMNS
- TV TUNER



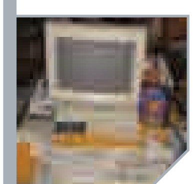
SG-1000 (PLUS THE MARK II AND III)
» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20-£50**
Sega's first console, and a piece of history! The Mark III model would later be redesigned to become the Master System. Like the Japanese Famicom, it's much nicer than the UK version.



SC-3000
» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx £50**
Computer equivalent of the SG-1000, also by Sega. Was popular in Australia and other ex-colonies. Mutually compatible with the SG-1000 as well.



MASTER SYSTEM I/II
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 with leads etc.**
Popular Sega 8-bit console, which competed against the NES. Adapted from previous systems.
- PHANTASY STAR
- WONDER BOY 3: DRAGON'S TRAP
- NINJA GAIDEN



AMSTRAD MEGA PC
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10.50 (according to eBay)**
A strange hybrid between an Amstrad PC and a Mega Drive. A nice collectable oddity, though according to past eBay auctions, not a high seller.



TERADRIVE
» YEAR **1991**
»» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx £100**
Another Mega Drive computer

hybrid. Released earlier than the Amstrad hybrid, these systems have no connection. Due to being exclusive to Japan, they are seldom seen in the wild. Likely to be very expensive if you are able to find one.



MEGA DRIVE/ GENESIS I/II

» YEAR **1989+**
» RARITY
» » PRICE **£10 depending on model**

The big daddy, Sega's most successful console and a retro classic.



GENESIS 3

» YEAR **1998**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35**

Developed by Majesco. This third, cut-down model is rarer and has some compatibility issues. USA only.

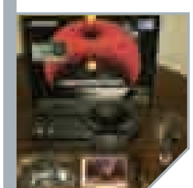


NOMAD

» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100**

Handheld Mega Drive. Pricey, low battery life and some compatibility problems.

- RANGER-X
- THUNDER FORCE IV
- COMIX ZONE



MULTIMEGA/ WONDERMEGA/

» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100+ depending on system**

CDX/Xeye

A series of different hybrid MD and MCD systems, released in the three main territories.



MEGA CD (SCD) I/II

» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 depending on system**

Sega's CD add-on for the Mega Drive. Despite heavy criticism, has many excellent games.

- POPFUL MAIL
- SNATCHER
- SONIC CD



PICO

» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 (more with games)**

Toy computer released for young children. The games come in nice storybook style boxes.

- SONIC'S GAMEWORLD
- ECCO JR. AND THE GREAT OCEAN HUNT
- THE LION KING: ADVENTURES AT PRIDE ROCK



SATURN

» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30**

Sega's competition against the PlayStation and N64. A real 2D powerhouse, that despite an amazing catalogue of games never really took off.

- SATURN BOMBERMAN
- GUARDIAN HEROES
- DRAGON FORCE

SINCLAIR



ZX-80

» YEAR **1980**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£200 Apparently if boxed and mint**

Very early British home computer from Sinclair. Low capability meant limited gaming possibilities. Now extremely hard to get hold of.

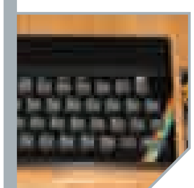


ZX-81

» YEAR **1981**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx £70 if mint**

Improved home computer from Sinclair, with black and white ASCII graphics. Not as hard to source as a ZX-80, but still commands a respectable price.

- 3D MONSTER MAZE
- MAZOGS
-SABOTAGE



ZX SPECTRUM 48K

» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**



ZX SPECTRUM 128K

» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£40**



ZX SPECTRUM

» YEAR **1984**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35**



ZX SPECTRUM +2

» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35**



ZX SPECTRUM +3

» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£40**

The British classic loved by many. A vast improvement over previous Sinclair computers, it was normally compared against the C64 and Amstrad home computers, which in turn caused many playground arguments over who had the better machine.

- HEAD OVER HEELS
- 3D DEATHCHASE
- SKOOL DAZE

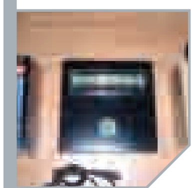
SNK



NEOGEO AES

» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£150 and upwards**

High powered home system by SNK. Features many high quality arcade games. Sadly, due to the high price of the original games, many titles are now ridiculously expensive to purchase.

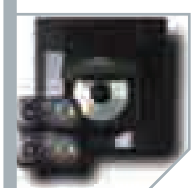


NEOGEO MVS

» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx £70 (multi-slot systems cost more)**

High powered arcade system by SNK, which many people prefer over the home based AES due to lower pricing of games. (The majority of NeoGeo titles appeared on both systems, or alternatively can be converted).

- METAL SLUG
- KING OF FIGHTERS ##
- WAKU WAKU 7



NEOGEO CD

» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100 varies**



NEOGEO CDZ

» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80 varies**

CD-based NeoGeo systems, an attempt by SNK to lower the cost of NeoGeo games. The CDZ is cheaper and has slightly improved loading times. Most CD titles are ports from the AES/MVS.

- VIEWPOINT
- AGGRESSORS OF DARK COMBAT
- SAMURAI SHOWDOWN RPG



NEOGEO POCKET (B/W)

» YEAR **1998**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**



NEOGEO POCKET COLOR

» YEAR **1999**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35**

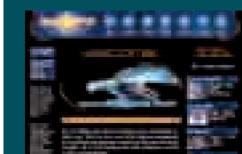
Handheld NeoGeo systems by SNK, that sadly failed to compete with the Game Boy, despite featuring some great games. Still a wonderful little system though. Be sure to buy the later colour screen model.

- FASELEI!
- CARD FIGHTERS (CAPCOM/SNK)
- MATCH OF THE MILLENNIUM (CAP VS SNK)

RETRO GAMING SITES

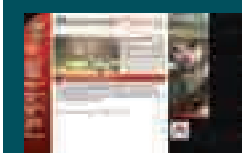
SHMUPS.COM

With *Radirgy* and *Under Defeat* recently released for the Dreamcast, we've been all over shmups.com. New reviews are in short supply, but the forums are busy and provide you with plenty of info about all the latest shooters. **– www.shmups.com**



MIYAMOTO SHRINE

Everything you need to know about Nintendo's most famous developer is here and ranges from biographies to classic Miyamoto quotes. In fact, our only complaint is that it hasn't been updated for some time. **http://www.miyamotoshrine.com/index.shtml**



YOLK FOLK.COM

Features all sorts of information about, *Dizzy*, the Oliver twins' most famous creation. Every game in the series is reviewed; there are interviews with the twins and even new home-brew games. A great site. Check it out at… **http://www.yolkfolk.com/**



RETROSPEC: RETRO GAMING AT ITS BEST

Retrospec features some of the best remakes around. Our favourite is *Head Over Heels*, but there are plenty of other titles available including a new update of Costa Panayi's *Deflector* and *Exolon DX*. **http://retrospec.sgn.net/**



Special thanks to **lofi-gaming-org.uk** who supplied several of our screenshots

RETRO SCENE

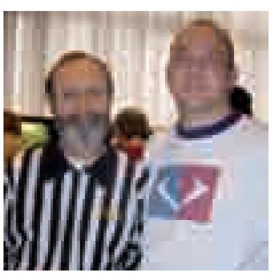
LOOK AROUND THE INTERNET AND YOU'LL FIND A THRIVING RETRO COMMUNITY. RETRO SCENE IS DEDICATED TO THOSE THAT KEEP THE OLD MACHINES ALIVE...



» A player in turmoil – Tony having just missed out on the record at CGEuk last year

MISSILE COMMAND RECORD FINALLY FALLS AFTER TWO DECADES

21 YEARS IN THE MAKING



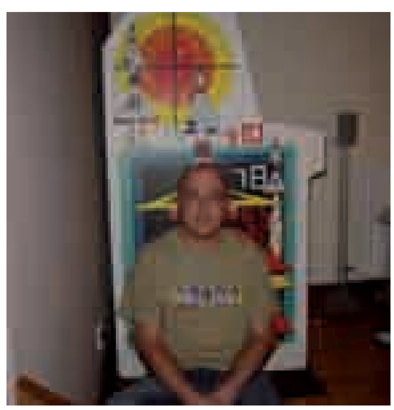
» Tony and Walter Day at last year's CGEUK, where he came so close…

The world of gaming records never sleeps and neither does Retro Gamer. In the early hours of March 10th, Tony Temple from Derbyshire, UK, called us to say he'd finally toppled the long-standing high score on Atari's *Missile Command*. 'I just told the missus,' explained a surprisingly composed Tony, 'but all I got was, "That's lovely darling. Can we sell the machine now?"

Tony's score of 1,967,830 was achieved on Tournament setting, which does not award any bonus cities. For 85 minutes he fended off countless waves of missiles and smart bombs to beat 1.7 million set by the colourful and controversial Roy Shildt in 1985. 'It's a relief to beat the record at last,' Tony confessed. 'Now I can get on and play some newer games. What's this *Halo* like, then?'

The score was verified by Twin Galaxies and chief TG Scorelord Walter Day gave this typically understated response: "Breaking the record on *Missile Command* is more than just achieving a high score on a videogame. The game is so difficult that it's like storming the beaches of Normandy and snatching victory from the jaws of defeat. It deserves to be remembered by future generations of gamers."

Tony's set his sights on cracking the two million mark and plans to head to this summer's Funspot Tournament in the USA, along with *Galaxian* champion Gary Whelan, to keep up the British end. Retro Gamer will be there, quarters in hand…



» Tony Temple relaxes against his MC cabinet, lovingly restored by Archer Maclean (that's the machine, not Tony…)

OWNED!

BRAND NEW SONIC X-TREME LEAK REVEALED TO BE A HOAX

When someone makes a gaming announcement of amazing proportions on or before the first day of April, you know you should accept the news with shares in a salt mine, let alone a pinch of salt. Nevertheless, it's amazing how many people fell for Sonic Cult's little joke.

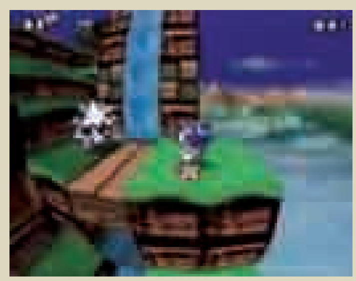
The flames to the fire were first fuelled when Sonic Cult revealed videos of *Sonic X-Treme* in action that had come from a new build that a member known only as DRX had managed to obtain. Being the warm-hearted individual that he was, DRX revealed that he had put the game on The Pirate Bay as a Torrent File, and hardcore *Sonic* fans were soon attempting to download the highly controversial title.

While many individuals were still sceptical about the game's authenticity, doubts were finally put to rest once Chris Senn (one of *Sonic X-Treme*'s lead developers who was also in on the prank) revealed that the screenshots were indeed from the PC version that he had been working on. Add in a (alleged) cease-and-desist order from Sega Europe and that was it – fans fell hook-line-and-sinker.

It wasn't until people started having trouble downloading the torrent (many found that it froze at 75 per cent) that they once again started to question the game's authenticity, and DRX finally came clean a day later. It turns out that DRX had faked the binary, placed it on The Pirate Bay and told people that he had traded a Silpheed prototype demo for the coveted disc. When people didn't believe him, two fellow forumites posted the aforementioned images that had come from a video that Senn had previously sent them.

After that, everything went crazy, with all sorts of individuals claiming credit for everything from sending DRX the original disk, to having actually downloaded and played the game.

DRX had effectively created one of gaming's best April Fools stunts by doing very little. God knows what would have happened if he'd really applied himself…



» Seeing Sonic running around in all his 3D glory fooled a lot of people - they're still crying now



» When something sounds too good to be true it usually is

EMULATE THIS

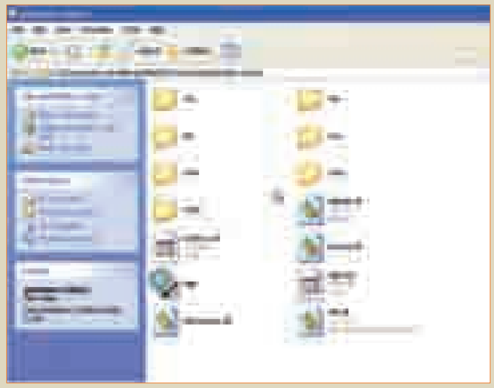
EVERY MONTH RETRO GAMER WILL BE GIVING YOU A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO THE WORLD OF EMULATION. TO TIE IN WITH OUR FEATURED MACHINE, THIS MONTH IT'S THE TURN OF THE GAME BOY COLOR

KIGB

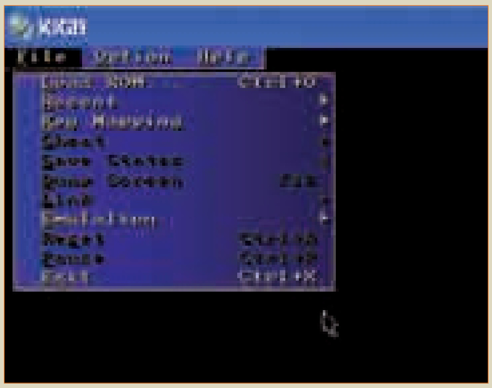
The fantastic Game Boy Color emulator KIGB currently supports the Game Boy, Game Boy Color and Super Game Boy. The guys are frequently updating the emulator and it's simple to use and very user-friendly.



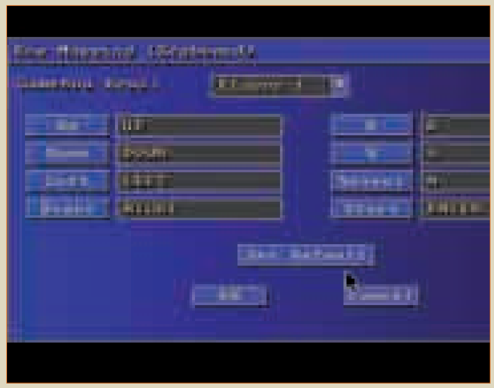
STEP 1 Head over to the official KIGB website http://kigb.emuunlim.com/. It's worth reading up on some of the features here, like online gaming and learn a little about KIGB's history and future. Download the latest version of KIGB.
While the emulator is downloading take a look at some of the links from the site. Then make a new file either on your desktop or in your my documents folder. Locate the zipped KIGB file and right click on it. Use the browse option to locate the file that you have created and extract the zipped KIGB file into that file.



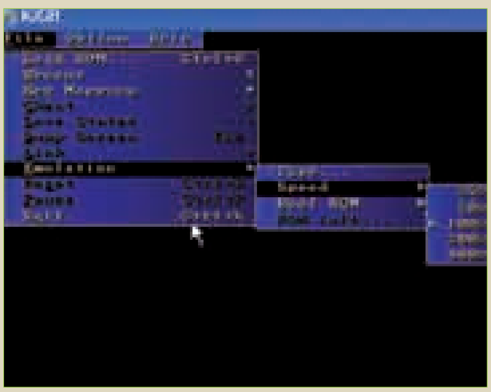
STEP 2 Move or Download any Game Boy Color ROMs that you are entitled to play into the ROM directory marked ROMs of the new file. Do not unzip them as the emulator reads zipped files only. Once you have placed the ROMs into the Rom directory close the file. Like many emulators KIGB likes to eat up ram, closing and reopening the file is like refreshing a browser. Open the newly created file again and select the Game Boy Color icon. After double-clicking the emulator will launch automatically. Now the fun really begins.



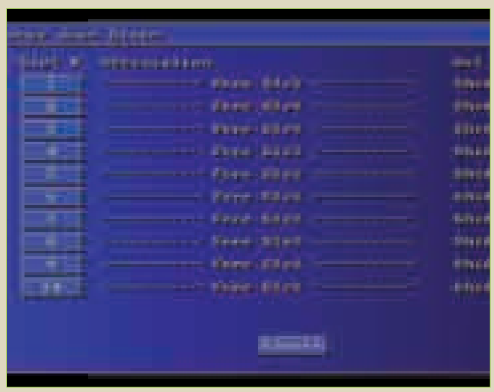
STEP 3 Once in, you're presented with three drop down menus, File Option and Help. Let's cover the File option first. For a quick start go to file and select the open ROM option. The contents of the ROM directory are displayed along with the drive they currently sit on. KIGB always defaults to the drive that the ROM directory is stored on. Highlight the ROM that you wish to play and click ok. The game will launch automatically using KIGB's default settings; any PC-configured joypads will already be configured.



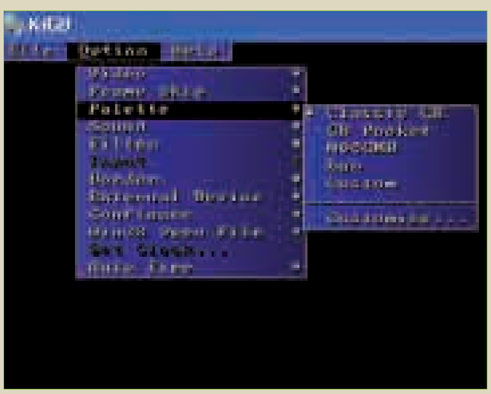
STEP 4 The file option lets you map the keys for the games; just highlight key mapping, and press the relevant key. You can find a history of games played or enter cheats. Known cheats that were in the original are available from fan sites. Game Genie and Game Shark codes are also supported and configured; the codes can be found at http://www.gamegenie.com/cheats/gamegenie/gameboy/ or http://vgstrategies.about.com/od/gameboycheatscodes/. Once a ROM is loaded go to the file option, open the cheat menu and input the code.



STEP 5 Whilst in the file option you can adapt the emulation speed settings and boot information. If a game is too fast or slow, click the emulator speed option to increase or decrease. If the emulator is still too slow, turn off some background programs that may be running on your PC. KIGB's default setting emulates the game in the format it was released on, but if you wanted to play a Game Boy game on a Game Boy Color it allows you to change the boot information so that you have true emulation. Just highlight the handheld you want to emulate.



STEP 6 Open File during a game and Highlight Save to save the game, there are ten slots available for each game, each slot is mapped to a function key for quick saves; slot 1 is mapped to F1. To restart a save game just reload the ROM and go back to file and the save option load the save relevant to the game. Open the Option menu for access to graphics and sound options. Video relates to the actual emulators display, half screen or full screen. Frame Skip gives the option to reduce animation frames but is negated by KIGB's emulator speed option.



STEP 7 Palette allows you to customise the emulator's appearance. Click on Palette and highlight your preference. Customise the appearance by using the up and down arrows to increase and decrease brightness. The Sound option allows you to switch between the original low channel Game Boy sound up to the multi-channelled later versions. There's an on/off switch and the ability to switch between mono and stereo. Best of all, the Pan option recreates the inconsistency of handheld gaming volume. All the sound options are toggled with a click of the mouse button.



STEP 8 There is a facility to record the sound of a game as you play it. Highlight sound and then click record. Select a destination and make a new file in 'my music'. Recordings play back through media player in wav format and then play the game, all music and effects will be recorded. KIGB also emulates the Game Boy printer and recognises the official one. Pictures can be printed of in-game action. If you have one, connect the Game Boy Printer to an Rs232 and PC. KIGB recognises it. Easier still F12 in game creates a screen dump and is to the snap directory.

Note: If you're not a Windows user, as many of you may be, then all is not lost as KIGB is also available for the Apple Macintosh and Linux. The Apple Macintosh version is particularly good and boasts a wide range of different features that range from Super Game Boy emulation to Game Genie and Game Shark support. Check it out at http://www.bannister.org/software/kigb.htm

DEVELOPER DIARY

AFTER COMPLETING THE REMAKE OF TOTAL ECLIPSE, WE DECIDED TO GO BACK TO DRILLER, THE GAME THAT KICK-STARTED THE FREESCAPE SERIES IN 1987. THE ONLY WAY TO TRULY REMAKE A GAME FROM THE EIGHTIES IS TO GO BACK AND LIVE IT, SO WITH A MIX OF ILLUSTRIOUS ARTISTS FROM 'NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL MUSIC 9' WAILING AWAY IN THE BACKGROUND, WE PAUSE TO WONDER WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO PEPSI & SHIRLEY...

THESE ARE THE DIARIES OF ANDY & STU – THE OVINE BOYS

IN THE BEGINNING...

***Total Eclipse* gave us the engine to work with and the first thing to do was to construct that recognisable first room in order to get the juices flowing. It's also a good time to experiment with the style of how locations might look in a modern day *Driller*.**





» Every game has to start somewhere, so here's the early stages of *Driller's* development.



» A rudimentary interior display and creation of the first location generated with help from the positions of the original 3D geometry

Wednesday 1st March

While the look and feel is important and something we do not want to lose, there is little reason to stick with the basic shapes, so our first job is to reinvent each object. Starting with the walls, a bit of detail is added using AC3D. The rest soon starts falling in to place.

Thursday 2nd March

With the first location built, the next job is to export all dynamic objects and separate them from the static world. The interior wall and bunker for example can be blasted away, so these need to be dynamic. The 3D world editor that we had constructed is used to bring everything back together. It also allows us to place the lights.

After feedback from *Total Eclipse*, we've decided to make a few minor enhancements. The main one being that dynamic objects no longer just disappear – they now fade in and out smoothly. This is working well.

Meanwhile, Smila (Trevor Storey) who did the 3D models for *Total Eclipse* is going to send us a full set of sprite graphics for a *Paradroid* Remake that he created for a fellow remaker. Unfortunately (or fortunately for us) the remake did not happen and Smila is now threatening to send a hard disk worth of graphics over to us.

This is a bit different to any project that we have started, in that most of the work and design have been done for us. *Paradroid* was such a classic and great game; we couldn't pass off the opportunity.

Okay so this is kind of surreal. I remember the first 'diary of a game' I ever read. It was by Andrew Braybrook (original author of *Paradroid* for those who lived under a rock) and featured in Zzap64!

The C64 featured silky smooth scrolling which I now have to emulate. I've opted to use 2D sprites in a 3D world. While Andy is busy with the 3D models in *Driller*, I got a prototype of the scrolling for *Paradroid* to work like a charm.





» This is meant to be all about *Driller*, but now *Paradroid's* slipped in as well…

Friday 3rd March

Received that hefty sized email from Smila, which contained every level and every sprite (so many sprites, so little time). We have decided that a 'to do' list is in order but first things first – time to load the game into an emulator. I hadn't played *Paradroid* for a very long time, I had to make sure that my rose-tinted glasses of nostalgia were not too clouded and the game I fondly remembered wasn't total pants.

Thankfully it is lacking in the pants department and plays just as I remember it.



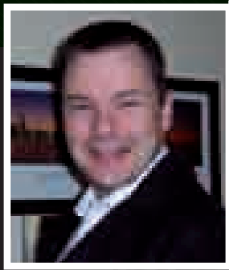


» A brief look at *Paradroid* - you should be able to download it soon. Promise

Saturday 4th March

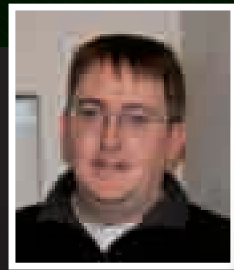
As we are only part-time games programmers, weekends are normally taken up with real lifeTM, and as a result we only get the odd half-hour here and there when our wives don't know (DOH! Our secret's now out).

Finished the *Paradroid* editor so now we can place all the animated sprites, lift positions, waypoints for the enemy droids etc.



NAME: STUART COLLIER
JOB: IT MANAGER
FAV GAMES: CHOLO, BRUCE LEE OR IMPOSSIBLE MISSION
FIRST REMAKE: JETPAC ON THE PC
LIKES: THE FRIENDLINESS OF THE RETRO COMMUNITY

NAME: ANDY HEWITT
JOB: WEB DEVELOPER, TEAM LEADER
FAV GAMES: GRADIUS, STORMBRINGER, ELITE AND MANY MORE!
FIRST REMAKE: BOULDERDASH CALLED THE ROCKFORD FILES
LIKES: CALL OF DUTY 2, OUTRUN 2006 AND GENERAL NINTENDO GAMES



Tuesday 7th March

All 20 levels are now complete. Smila is an incredibly fast worker (we suspect he never sleeps or leaves the house). We also suspect that he's a magic elf whose real name is Colin, but we know he's a bit touchy about that subject.

Also the deck plan has been finished, complete with working lifts to other levels. This only took a short while, as there are plenty of resources on the Internet of *Paradroid* Level plans. What did we do before the Internet? Oh yeah, I think we may have gone outside more.



» Two great remakes, one diary. How's that for amazing value for money?

Thursday 9th March

We received a mock up AVI from Smila of how he wants to see the intro screen. Being inspired by what we saw we just had to get it coded. Ooooooh, particles…



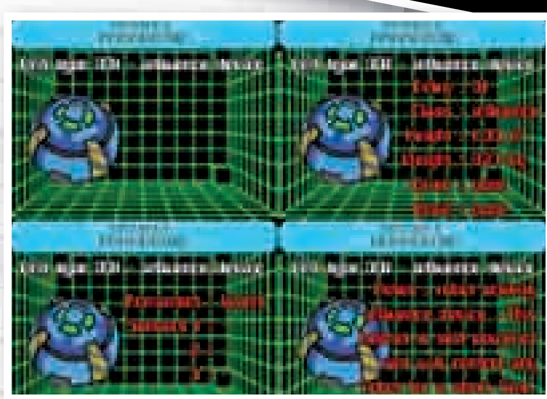
Friday 10th March

The computer terminal screens are in and working, along with all the lift code. That's all the aesthetic screens taken care of, now to start on the actual game.

Sunday 12th March

Back to *Driller* and next location on the list is Lapis Lazuli. We've already got some assets from Amethyst, which we plan to reuse, so the west wall and floor are the first things to appear.

A few late nights on the run is starting to take its toll. I think my boss is starting to notice the matchsticks that are now propping my eyes open. Not to worry, maybe I'll get some of those comedy glasses with a picture of bright and breezy eyes on them... surely he won't notice? Or maybe an early night is the only way to recover?



Monday 13th March

Lapis Lazuli is now starting to look industrial. Quite accidental at first, but with the way the large structures have turned out and the floating line to the East resembling a power line, this location is surely going to have a generating theme. Made a note to add some large rotating fans for the two largest structures later.

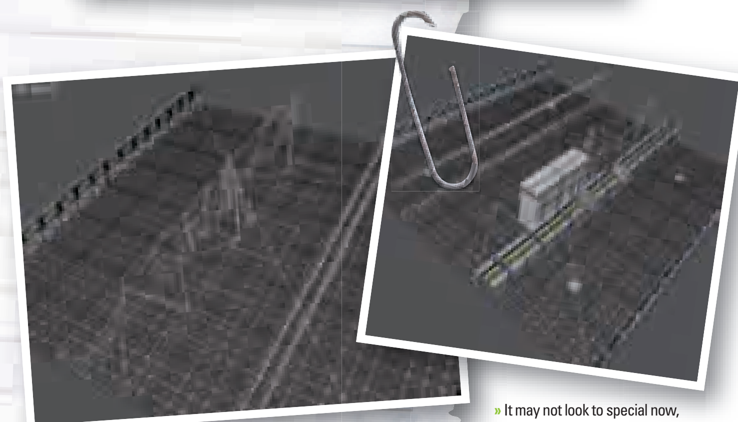
Tuesday 14th March

Sitting at work contemplating what to tackle next, only having about half an hour during lunch to do anything serious means scribbling ideas throughout the day on bits of paper ready to take home (if only my boss knew). I did manage to get all the scripts and attributes from the original game into an Excel worksheet for easy reference though. Also downloaded a recorded walkthrough of the game, which can be replayed on a spectrum emulator. Very handy.

Once the models and location has been constructed in the 3D modeller, it only takes ten minutes or so to get them rebuilt in the editor. This includes setting up the scripts that tell the game engine what to do when either bumped into or shot.



» The original 3D geometry had already been extracted, and this is a good starting point for creating all new 3D objects to build our first location, Amethyst



» It may not look to special now, but just wait until you see the end results.

RETRO SCENE

EVERY MONTH RETRO GAMER WILL REVEAL CLASSIC HOME-BREW TITLES THAT MAY HAVE PASSED YOU BY…

Remake of the Month

retro GAMER SIZZLER

HEAD OVER HEELS

Twenty hard months of blood, sweat and tears were put into this remarkable homage to Jon Ritman and Bernie Drummond's classic platformer. *Head Over Heels* is one of the finest remakes we've ever been fortunate enough to stumble across. Bar a few (very) minor details, the structure of the game is neigh on identical to the original game, and perfectly captures the spirit of the 1987 hit. Everything that made the original game so fun to play has been retained, but Thomas Kac has added a few useful additions that improve *Head Over Heel*'s wonderful gameplay. The most obvious improvement is the addition of shadows for the main characters. While this may sound superfluous it makes a huge difference to the way you approach each room and, subsequently, many puzzles are much easier to solve. Then there's the ability to save the game. Again, purists may moan at this new addition, but *Head Over Heels* was a very tough title. Add in some responsive controls and it becomes obvious that the main reason why so little has been added to this remake is because it genuinely doesn't need it. Finally, special mention has to go to Graham Goring's superb visuals. Every character has been animated to perfection and the vast worlds are full of charm and character. One of the greatest 8-bit games of all time looks and plays better than ever. What are you waiting for? Download it now.

RATING 91%

YOU'LL BE HEAD OVER HEELS WITH THIS REMAKE

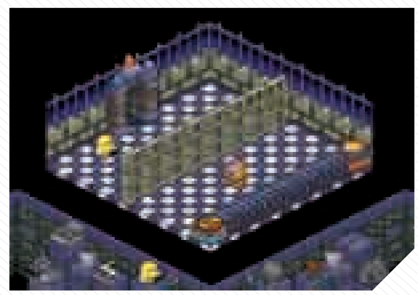
» And so begins a beautiful adventure…



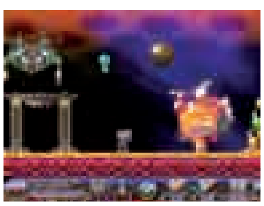
- » **FORMAT:** PC AND MAC
- » **RELEASE DATE:** 2003
- » **DEVELOPED BY:** RETROSPEC
- » **LINK:** HTTP://RETROSPEC.SGN.NET GAME-OVERVIEW.PHP?LINK=HOH
- » **REVIEWED BY:** DARRAN JONES



» One complaint with the remake is that the new positioning of the doors means you'll often bump into them. Doh!



EXOLON DX



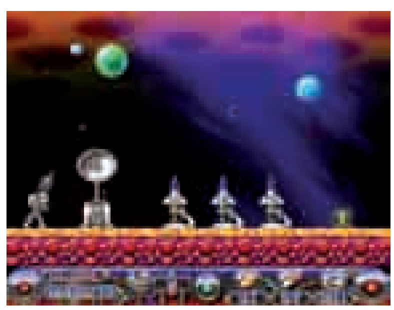
- » **FORMAT:** PC AND MAC
- » **RELEASE DATE:** OUT NOW
- » **DEVELOPED BY:** GRAHAM GORING
- » **LINK:** HTTP://RETROSPEC.SGN.NET/ GAME-OVERVIEW.PHP?LINK=HOH
- » **REVIEWED BY:** SPANNER

EX (OLON) POST FACTO.

Well bugger me sideways with a rocket-propelled grenade if I didn't miss out on an excellent platform shooter way back in the day. *Exolon*, for the benefit of the other 8-bit player who was hiding on Mars in 1987, kicks squidgy alien ass.

Exolon DX brings the planet-plodding alien-butcher back to our PC screens in a colourful update of the 8-bit classic. The remake faired amicably right from the outset as I judged the book by its dynamic cover. The selection screen (offering you the option to redefine the keys to your joypad, which I recommend) smacks rather pleasantly of an Amiga demo, with scrolling, chrome coloured text at the bottom and a funkadelic, happy-trance soundtrack pumping along in the background.

The game itself is virtually identical to the original in terms of level design and gameplay, and (to quote an irritating leather-faced film critic) why not? 19 years ago, *Exolon* 'Mega Gamed' and 'Smashed' its way to the top of the charts, so it certainly wasn't in need of fixing. The addition of superb space-scape backdrops depicting wonderful rainbow rimmed nebulae (thank you very much) and animated planet systems add a much-needed depth to the superficial sheen. Everything else is still in place, dressed in its Sunday best for the new millennium, with ray gun for organic aggressors, missiles for obstinate obstacles and pulse wave for maniacal machinery.



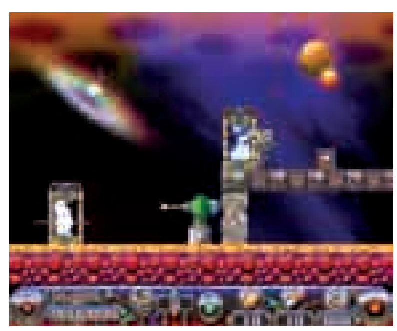
» Plenty of obstacles that need fire bombing, just like the original

But here's the problem. Why bother? The original was great across all platforms, so there's no bickering between Spec-chums and C64ers, and when you can emulate it up on your mobile phone, do you really need a 13Mb glossy re-imagining that struggles for breath on older graphics cards like mine (which I didn't even realise was that old)?

Still, it's not like it costs you anything to download, and I don't want to sound ungrateful for an excellent (free) remake, so it's definitely worth a look. And so is the old one on the format of your choice. Only, perhaps more so…

In summery: A great game, but that's down to the original rather than the remake, so download whichever is quicker and you'll always be guaranteed a right retro treat.

RATING 68%



» Fantastic celestial backdrops, just like… no wait, those are new

HOME-BREW RATED

Home-Brew, love it or loathe it, you can't deny that it's becoming an important part of the retro community. This month we take a break from games and look at some great music discs that are currently available



» Ben Daglish struts his stuff

WHEN NEW AND OLD COLLIDE...

BACK IN TIME LIVE

- » **FORMAT:** 2DVD/CD SET
- » **RELEASE DATE:** OUT NOW
- » **WEBLINK:** www.c64audio.com
- » **PUBLISHER:** HIGH TECHNOLOGY PUBLISHING LTD
- » **PRICE:** £19.99
- » **REVIEWED BY:** CRAIG GRANNELL

C64Audio.com's long-time mission to wrench C64 SID tunes into the present day eventually led to live gigs. The 'old guard' returned to play alongside recently formed SID-oriented acts, each offering a unique take on classic SID tunes. *Back in Time Live* offers 45 live tracks on two DVDs, and a 'best of' audio CD for those who'd rather listen than watch.

Disc one begins with PRESS PLAY ON TAPE, whose 'SID with real instruments' approach is sometimes a little pedestrian. But when the band click, they light up the stage, notably when Søren adds buckets of personality by becoming the front-man for 'I'm A Pumpkin Man ' and the excellent Kraftwerk parody 'Das Gamer' ('He's a gamer and he's looking bad…')

Elsewhere, the disc features: pseudo-rap stylings from C64 Mafia; SID a cappella by accomplished Swedish band Visa Röster, whose entrancing covers work surprisingly well; and Ben Daglish's Stuck in D'80s—similar to PPOT in style, but with more vivacity.

Rob Hubbard's live set dominates disc two. Despite some duff notes ("I thought it'd be good to play unplugged, and then I realised how hard it was because all these tunes are so bloody fast," Hubbard quips at one point) the set contrasts nicely with the largely pop/rock-oriented disc one. A short film, including interviews with Martin Galway and Ben Daglish, rounds off the second DVD.

Production is fine: sound and image quality are good enough, and retro touches are peppered throughout, such as C64-style pop-up comments during PPOT's set and International Karate characters battling on-stage during Visa Röster's take on Hubbard's classic. Anyone with an interest in retro gaming music will be entertained for a couple of hours.

RATING **70%**



» Press Play on Tape with a somewhat pedestrian performance. Still, they seem to be enjoying themselves…



» A cappella C64 group? You better believe it

THERE ARE 10 TYPES OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD...

IT'S BINARY, BABY!

- » **FORMAT:** CD
- » **RELEASE DATE:** OUT NOW
- » **WEB LINK:** www.c64audio.com
- » **PUBLISHER:** HIGH TECHNOLOGY PUBLISHING LTD.
- » **PRICE:** £9.99
- » **REVIEWED BY:** CRAIG GRANNELL

Most CDs based on computer game music excite for purely nostalgic reasons. However, in *It's Binary, Baby!* Makke has crafted a decent pop record, drawing on Eighties and Nineties synth-pop influences such as The Human League, Kraftwerk and Nitzer Ebb for inspiration.



» *It's Binary, Baby!* Takes its inspiration from artists ranging from the The Human League to Nitzer Ebb

Despite this CD being rather eclectic, almost feeling like a compilation at times, it's clear the 'game music remix CD' has entered a new era here, one where it can justifiably fight for attention alongside contemporary chart releases. Although the track 'Binary Baby' veers a little too close to Kraftwerk territory for comfort, the similar-in-style 'I Am A Database' is a classic piece of dance-pop – a 'Home Computer' for the 00s. This track also highlights Makke's ear for a strong hook, something the C64 tunes many of this CD's tracks were based on had in spades. (Ten of the 13 non-bonus tracks on the CD 'cover' SIDs.) But rather than whacking vocals over note-for-note remakes, Makke messes with arrangements to great effect. Infuriatingly catchy standout track Lazy Jones is an excellent example of this: its arrangement deviates from the SID, but nonetheless crams in plenty of hooks from the original.

Makke's output also differs from that of many of his contemporaries in his use of lyrics, some of which are based around the game the original SID appeared in. Although this could have resulted in a trite, in-jokey mess, Makke's sense of humour and ambiguous couplets more often produce witty lyrics than toe-curling ones, some of which will hit home with long-time gamers – witness *Lazy Jones*' 'The joystick is ruining your life/Stuck in a rut, an endless strife' and '[His mother] would shake her head/Saying "Why don't you get a girl instead?"'

Fans of Eighties synth-pop bands or C64 music should find plenty to like here. Fans of both will be overjoyed.

RATING **76%**

» *It's Binary Baby!'s* stand-out track is a wonderful homage to David Whittaker's *Lazy Jones*



EMULATION NATION



COMPUTER PARADISE
GAMEPARK 32

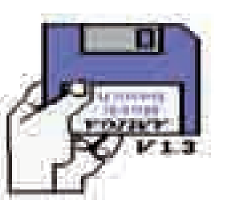
Gamepark's first entry into the handheld market, the GP32, has proven to be an underground success due to being open source and capable of playing a wide range of home-brew and emulated software. Other applications such as MP3 players and GPCinema 2 allowing playback of AVI files has meant the machine has garnered a reasonable following despite its limited release.

> "ATARI 800 HAS AN INCREDIBLY EFFICIENT EMULATOR IN THE PROGRAM ATARI800, WHILE DRAGON AND TANDY ARE IMITATED WITH THE XROAR"

Although the brand-spanking new release of the GP2X has seen the GP32 scene decline, the staggering amount of home-brew software available along with near perfect 8-bit computer and console emulation means it's still worth getting hold of, especially as you can pick one up on eBay now for around £50.

Early computer systems are where the GP32 excels and you can find fully working emulators for the Intellivision, Vectrex, Commodore Plus IV, C64, Spectrum, Atari 800, Dragon and Tandy and Colecovision. For the Spectrum, the best emulator is the fz32 by Ryleh who is a prolific coder on the scene, and it runs at full speed with very little problems in the way of bugs. Atari 800 has an incredibly efficient emulator in the program atari800, while Dragon and Tandy are imitated with the excellent XRoar. The Colecovision has the flawless fCol32 emulator which, thanks to having full speed and sound offers an authentic experience. Regrettably, the Atari 2600 is the one failing in early computer emulation, with very few titles working at a desired speed or quality. Other systems are catered for such as the Amstrad CPC (Pituka), both MSX machines (Fmsx32 by Ryleh) and the Atari ST (Castaway), which makes up for the lack of a viable Amiga emulator. The compatibility rate for these emulators is quite high, with most titles running after a bit of initial tweaking. Pituka and Castaway also have chatboard support, which is a modified phone keypad that can be plugged into the GP32: so virtual keyboards can be a thing of the past.

The most impressive advance in the scene though is the emergence of MAME that many thought the machine couldn't handle. In order to get around compatibility issues, Franxis developed individual emulators that could run set programs i.e. Taito for *Bubble Bobble* and *Rainbow Islands*, Capcom for *1942*, *1943* etc and as a result, a huge selection of games can now be played on your machine. With alternate front ends, full speed and sound, support for over 700 games and a simple launcher, MAME's different incarnations are easily the most technically impressive.



» This screen fooled GP32 users that it was an Amiga Emulator. Alas, it's a demo

CONSOLE MADNESS

If early consoles such as the NES and Master System appeal, then you'll be happy to know that both machines have now reached almost perfect status. Little John is the emulator of choice for the NES, which runs with full speed and sound as well as being easy to navigate. The Master System has two key emulators namely fsms32 and Masterlator. Both have complete compatibility; the main difference is that Masterlator has fancier presentation, features scrolling and fixes a border around the game screen.



» There are some impressive technical demos on the handheld. Screenshots don't do them justice

Later consoles such as the Mega Drive and Super Nintendo are emulated although compatibility is often a mixed bag. The best SNES emulator is OpenSnes9x, which is open source and crackle free. While quite a few titles work at different clock speeds on the SNES, some need to be tweaked because of transparency issues (*Chrono Trigger* springs to mind) while others like *Super Mario RPG* don't work at all. The Mega Drive emulators (DR MD which has full speed, sound, supports saves and zip files, fGen32 with full speed and some sound and GigaDrive which is fast but has no sound at all) have a good success rate but again, some games won't work at all. WarmFluffyUK from the GP2x forums has a compatibility website for SNES and Megadrive emulators alongside other platforms at http://www.berzerk.co.uk/gp32/index.php. The PC Engine is supported by a fantastic emulator called GPEngine, although its biggest flaw is the inability to actually save games.

Regrettably, handheld emulation has mixed results on the GP32. Game Gear games are compatible with the SMS emulators (with the exception of DR SMS) and I have yet to come across a game that doesn't work. The Game

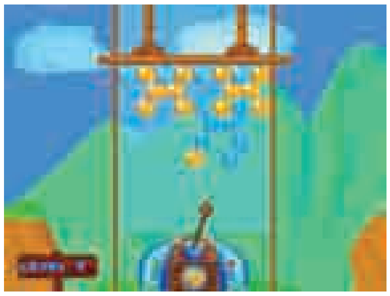


» *Ah Doh* sees a girl trying to avoid being hit by falling cats

THE RECENT RELEASE OF THE GP2X MAY BE GETTING PEOPLES' ATTENTION AT THE MOMENT BUT THE PRECEDING HANDHELD GP32 STILL WARRANTS YOUR TIME. KIM WILD TAKES A LOOK AT THE EXCELLENT HOME-BREW AND EMULATION SCENE.



» *Mafi Sushi Panic* sees a cat having to take sushi from the flying birds. Addictive



» *Pogy's Adventures In Bubble World* is an example of what can be created with Fenix

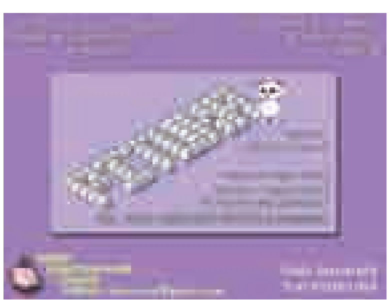
Boy/Color (fgb32 by Ryleh) is superb for most titles, with only some commercial Color games not fully working. Game Boy Advance emulation is poor, being only able to play very basic home-brew software, with other games either not functioning or running very slowly. Neo Geo Pocket emulation suffers from the same problem, with only *Metal Slug* and home-brew games working properly. The Wonderswan (Wonderboi) program works but varies in speed, whilst GPLynx, an Atari Lynx emulator, has come along in leaps-and-bounds over the past year and although the display still suffers from flickering, many games are compatible and play well.

INTERPRETERS AND PORTS

Another key area of the home-brew scene involves interpreters and ports. Interpreters are the same as an emulator as they mimic a program or selection of programs but require the original game files to run properly. One of the most popular and impressive is SCUMMVM, which many adventure fans will be familiar with on the PC and Mac, plus other systems. The GP32 edition isn't as versatile as the others; to date it just supports *Monkey Island 1* and *2*, *Zak McKracken*, *Maniac Mansion*, *Loom*, *Indiana Jones The Last Crusade*, *Fate Of Atlantis* (very slow), *Sam & Max Hit The Road* (without voices) and *Day Of The Tentacle,* but this is something that is under development. Other adventure-game interpreters are available including Sarien and Free SCI (plays early Sierra titles including *Police Quest* and *King's Quest*) and Kronos, which will run Magnetic Scroll's games. Ports are less common as many are abandoned at an early stage of development but there are a handful of titles that stand out from the crowd. *Beats Of Rage*, a *Streets Of Rage* clone that was developed on PC and Dreamcast, is heavily supported on the GP32 and numerous mods have been converted. Although the original stand-alone game doesn't take up a lot of room on SMC, many of the mods vary in size from anything like 12mb to 90mb. *XRick* is as close to the original as you can possibly get and *Smash GP* is an excellent remake of the *Smash Bros* series.

Someone who has been keeping the flagging scene alive the past six months has been David Whittaker, otherwise known as A600 on the GP32x forums. A 32-year-old Spaniard who works as an agriculturist in the 'real' world, A600 has worked on numerous ports and interpreters including *XRick*, *Heretic 32* and *Hexen 32.* "I purchased a GP32 FLU three years ago when Castaway, the Atari ST emulator, was released." explains A600. "I'm a big Amiga fan so a portable Atari ST sounded great to me." He started programming for the GP32 after playing the port for *Rick Dangerous.* "After trying to play *XRick*, I found that jumping with the D-pad was a bit tricky. I changed the control layout, added the music and sound effects from the last available version and hi-score saving." Of all the projects he has been involved with though, *Hexen 32* remains a personal favourite. "It was my first 'big' port and took

"DAVID WHITTAKER, A 32-YEAR-OLD AGRICULTURALIST IN THE 'REAL WORLD', HAS BEEN KEEPING THE FLAGGING SCENE ALIVE"



» A600's Amstrad CPC emulator is compatible with many titles, easy to use and nicely presented.



» *This Smash Bros* remake comes with an editor so you can create your own characters

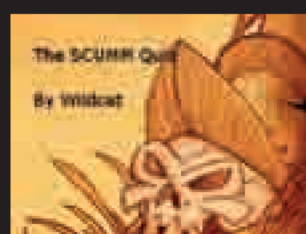
CREATE YOUR OWN GAMES

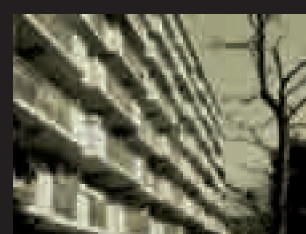
WHEN PLAYING NORMAL GAMES ISN'T ENOUGH FOR YOU...

Even if you don't possess any programming ability, developers have programs for the GP32 that will enable you to create your own masterpiece. These include Zot!, Fenix, Gigas Engine, Shoot-'em-up Construction Kit and Virtua Novel System. Fenix is the one that's most used as it is a program that originated on the PC so titles developed using it can be converted from PC to GP32 or GP2X. Zot! is ideal for creating side scrollers and top down games like *Bomberman,* Gigas Engine is specifically for RPGs while Shoot-'em-up Construction Kit (SEUK) is for 2D offerings. Virtual Novel System has seen some releases such as *Warlock Of Firetop Mountain* – a completed conversion of the game book of the same name by Steve Jackson. *Pigeon In The Big City* is a humorous adventure while *FATE,* a w.i.p. title, certainly shows a lot of promise.











» While it has now been surpassed by the superior GP2X, the GP32 is still a great introduction to home-brew

EMULATION NATION

DON'T BE FOOLED BY ITS AGE, THE GP32 STILL WARRANTS YOUR TIME. KIM WILD TAKES A LOOK AT ITS EXCELLENT HOME-BREW AND EMULATION SCENE.

"IT'S BEST TO GET A 128MB CARD TO START OFF WITH, AS YOU'LL BE TO OF HOME-BREW OR EMULATED, IF YOU ARE USING IT FOR THE C64"

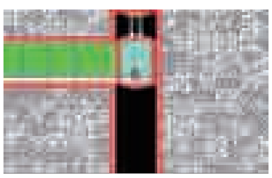


» Who would have thought the GP32 would be a portal to so many treasures?

C64 ON THE MOVE

12 VERSIONS AVAILABLE AND STILL GOING STRONG!

While there are more technically impressive emulators, the one that holds the most nostalgia value for yours truly is that of the C64. Frodo, the main C64 emulator now in its 12th incarnation, enables the GP32 to play the vast majority of C64 games available and titles run at their correct speed. The games are automatically configured to GP32 controls (unless you need to use the virtual keyboard or another joystick port within the menu settings) and sound is spot on. Chatboard support has been implemented for those who are interested in playing text adventures in a more efficient manner. Although there are still a few titles that just won't work (most notably the *Creatures* series and *Mayhem In Monsterland*) the thousands of games that are compatible means it is like having a C64 in the palm of your hand.



» Now you can play Impossible Mission on the move. Brilliant



» Frodo opens up a whole new world, well, a whole new C64 world…



» Yet another C64 classic you can play whilst waiting for the bus



» *Beats Of Rage* is heavily supported on GP32. This screenshot is of the *Mega Man* edition

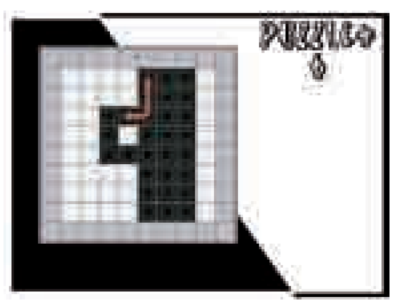
me more than two months to get working. Thanks to working on it I learned a lot of tricks about porting, so now it isn't that hard!"

Whittaker's recent releases include *CloneKeen* and *OpenJazz32*, an interpreter for the *Commander Keen* and *Jazz JackRabbit* games, *REminiscence32* (Flashback Interpreter) and *Heart Of Alien Redux*, which plays the Sega CD game of the same name. At the moment, A600 is "working on a *ScummVM* 0.82 port. Right now, the *Scumm*, *Beneath A Steel Sky* and *Simon The Sorcerer* drivers are working quite well."

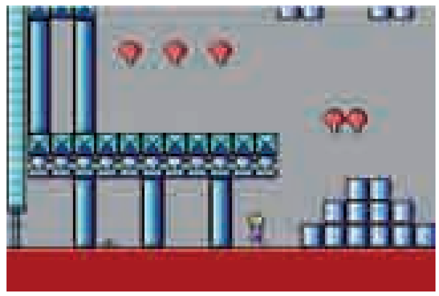
SMARTMEDIA CARDS AND SOFTWARE

So you've got yourself a GP32, how do you get those applications working on your handheld? First of all you will need a Smartmedia card, usually a media for digital cameras, although the popularity of SD means they are getting more difficult to find online and electrical retailers are the best places to visit. The important thing to remember with the GP32 is that it can't take cards larger than 128mb as they run at a higher voltage

It's best to get a 128mb card to start off with, as you'll be able to store hundreds of



» Even *Polarium*, Nintendo DS's classic puzzle title, has received an impressive remake for the GP32



» The Commander Keen interpreter allows you to play the games using original DOS PC files

home-brew or emulated games, especially if you are using it for the C64 or Spectrum titles. These can vary in price from £10-20 so it's best to shop around. Once you have your card, it will need to be formatted with the GP32 (not with the PC or Mac as it will format it to a different setting) and then you can transfer games with the PC Link program. If you're running Windows XP however, which seems to be most people these days, PC Link doesn't work properly so you'll have to install GPDrive through the program. This makes the computer treat the GP32 as an external drive, allowing transfer of applications with ease. A card reader can be purchased to get around this but only specific ones recognise the GP32 so it is best to buy one from either GBAX (http://www.gbax.com) or http://www.gp32z.com, a small store set up by a forum member, to ensure compatibility.

GP32x (http://www.gp32x.com) is the largest GP32 and GP2X resource on the Internet, which is also linked to a download archive (http://www.gp32x.de) where the mentioned home-brew games and emulators in this article can be downloaded. Evil Dragon, joined the website on March 4th 2002 after purchasing a GP32 and went on to open the archive which "replaced the download-area of GP32x.com and is, well, the best-known File Archive for the GP32 I guess." As you would expect, such a site takes up considerable maintenance. "Currently, there are 10 people maintaining the site. Hando is the admin, the rest mostly moderates the site, and I'm nearly the only one posting news. I guess I spend about one – two hours per day, depending on how much new stuff comes out," Evil Dragon explains.

Despite the decline in GP32 releases, Evil Dragon promises that the format will continue to be supported. "Some guys (like A600) continue to support the GP32 and show that the machine is still capable of running a lot of advanced stuff. And I promise to test EVERY gp2x Fenix game on the GP32 and include it in the archive if it works fine (and the other way round)."

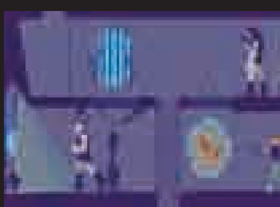


» *Crocodingus In Crocoland* is a GP32 created platformer and is great fun to play

GP32 EMULATOR GAMES

THE HUNDREDS OF EXCELLENT HOME-BREW TITLES AVAILABLE FOR GP32 MEAN THAT CHOOSING JUST FIVE IS VERY DIFFICULT. HERE ARE THE ONES THAT CURRENTLY DOMINATE OUR PLAYING TIME.

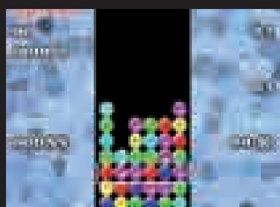
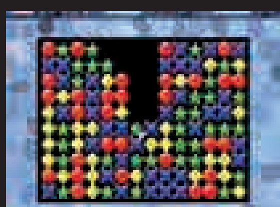


ANOTHER WORLD

Another World is a port of the Amiga original and showcases the capabilities of the GP32. Developed with the kind permission of the creators Eric Chahi and Jean-Francois Freitas, this version is based on the RAW interpreter by Gregory Montoir, which enables it to be as close to the original creation as possible. The results are really fantastic; you'd be hard-pushed to tell the difference visually from its inspiration and the sound effects and music are as atmospheric as ever. Controls have been replicated, although jumping can be a little awkward with the GP32's D-pad but *Another World* remains as enjoyable as it was years ago. Even the close-up animations and death sequences have been included and you are even given passwords to record your progress.

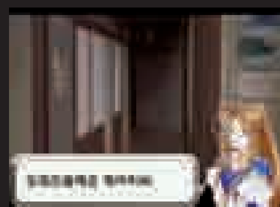
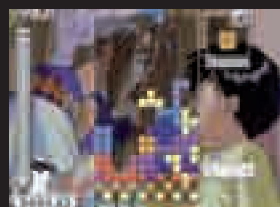
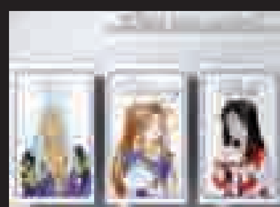
» **WEBSITE:** HTTP://WWW.DISTANT-EARTH.CO.UK/AWGP32/

PUZZLE MIX

This release from Oankali is an incredibly addictive puzzle game that is effectively four titles in one. Visually it may not look much, but like most simple puzzle games these games have that uncanny ability to drain hours and hours of your precious time. The game you'll spend most time on is called *Same*, where you have to select blocks of the same colour and clear the screen although this is harder than it sounds. *Tri-Blocks* is essentially *Columns* repackaged while *Shift* is a similar concept where three colours have to matched-up left or right as the blocks move up the screen. Finally, *Swapit* has you having to move adjacent blocks to line up three matching ones of the same colour and is very similar to *Bejewelled* but with only one gameplay mode. All four games are worth a look.

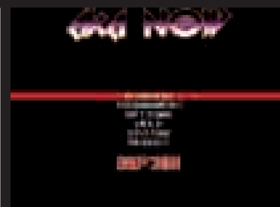
» **WEBSITE:** HTTP://WWW.GP32X.DE

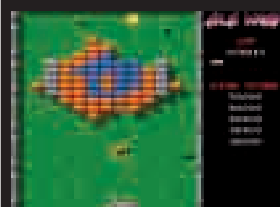




MANIA GP

Tetris is an all time classic and although most platforms have a spin off in some form, *Mania GP* is particularly impressive and is definitely worth looking at. This version is based on the *Oh My Goddess!* anime, using characters and backgrounds from the series and a fantastic musical score. There are two versions of the program available – the full program with all music, sound and animations takes up a whopping 30mb while a smaller program, compiled by a GP32 user, features the game without the trimmings and can be downloaded for around 10mb if you're short on space. It plays just as well as any decent *Tetris* clone and has an assortment of modes to keep you occupied. The story mode is entirely in Korean and therefore utterly incomprehensible but it doesn't make the game any less captivating. Well worth a few hours.

» **WEBSITE:** HTTP://WWW.GP32X.DE

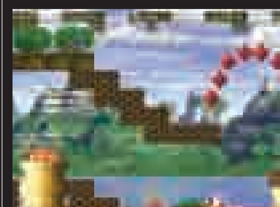
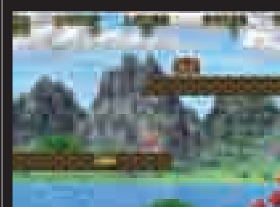




AKA NOID

This *Arkanoid* re-make has seen various releases over the last few years but the latest version is easily the most complete. The game has been created and looks identical to the arcade original, with an authentic title screen and even an introductory screen. Gameplay comes complete with power-ups that help or hinder your progress and hidden warp modes that can make you skip forward to certain levels. The physics of the bat and ball are superb and the arcade feel is enhanced by the classic bleeps and backing music. Several modes are included which are classic and tournament while Extra, is almost like a sequel for those who have exhausted the previous modes. It also features pretty backgrounds of anime girls, which will undoubtedly appeal to the male fan base!

» **WEBSITE:** HTTP://ANTHOLOGIE.EMU-FRANCE.COM/

GIANA RETURNS

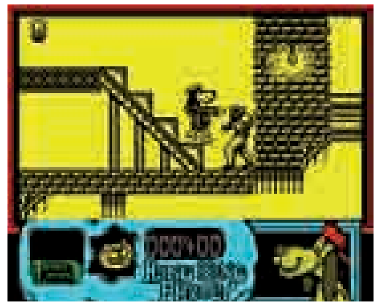
If you've got fond memories of *The Great Giana Sisters* on the C64 (a *Super Mario Bros* clone that was withdrawn from the market after Nintendo got wind of it) you'll enjoy this polished platformer. The levels have been created from scratch even though it's based on the original and gameplay remains the same. There are six worlds containing six levels and after the second, you'll receive passwords to note your progress. Like most platform games, the aims are simple; solve the level within the time limit and 100 diamonds reward you with an extra life. There are hidden power-ups to uncover and it is possible to discover secret rooms. The graphics are superb, managing to recreate the *Giana Sisters* style and the controls are spot on, resulting in a thoroughly enjoyable platformer.

» **WEBSITE:** HTTP://WWW.GIANAS-RETURN.DE/



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

Starfox 2: Starfox was a massive hit on Nintendo's SNES, so why did the ambitious sequel get cancelled? Retro Gamer reveals the answer



COMPANY PROFILE

Hi-Tech cornered the 8-bit market with a slew of Hanna Barbara cartoon licences, only to go bankrupt. Retro Gamer charts its sad history

RETROINSPECTION

Amstrad CPC 464. The poor old 464 always came in third to the ZX Spectrum and Commodore 64. Retro Gamer argues why it should have done so much better



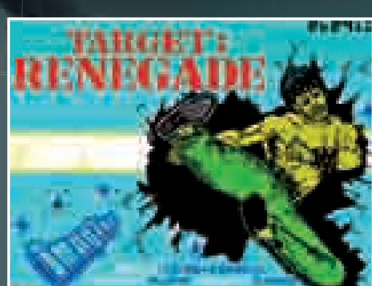
EMULATION NATION

Fancy playing classic Japanese RPGs but can't speak the language? Worry no further as John Szczepaniak has the answers you're looking for



THE MAKING OF…

Mike Lamb and Gary Bracey reveal the story behind one of the greatest 8-bit beat-'em-ups ever made and it's only in Retro Gamer



THE MAKING OF…

We talk to the creators of Pinball Fantasies to find out how they created the sequel to one of the best-loved pinball games of all time



NEXT MONTH

ON SALE 25 MAY 2006



DEVELOPER LOOKBACK

ACTIVISION

Developer Lookback: Formed in 1979 Activision is now one of the world's biggest publishers, with an impressive back catalogue of classic titles. Find out how it all began

AND THE REST...
Jonti in Japan
Magic Moments
Reviews
News
Full Of Eastern Promise
And much, much more

retro GAMER
BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO CLASSIC GAMES
LOAD 25

NEXT ISSUE

END/GAME



GROWL

In a surprising change from the normal testosterone-fuelled fighters, *Growl* actually gave you a purpose that was far nobler than simply rescuing your girlfriend. You instead got to rescue captured animals and return them to the wild. Conservation rules!



SCREEN 1
Now here's something you don't see every day. You've finally reached the end of level boss and he greets you by trying to bury you under a thrown tank. This guy's either got serious anger issues or there's more to him than meets the eye…



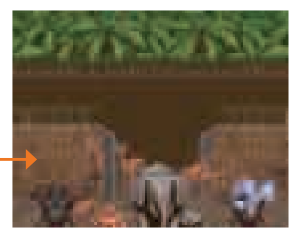
SCREEN 2
Aha! He's not really a man at all. He's actually got some sort of weird bug living inside him. There's no bug spray available but our insidious new foe seems to hate fire. Pick up that rocket launcher and blast the bug-type thingy to kingdom come.



SCREEN 3
With the king of the poachers defeated, you can finally praise yourself for a job well done, brush off your britches and get around to freeing all those poor animals. Just make sure you get out their way, no point getting crushed now.



SCREEN 4
You've endured some torturous fights, battled your way through hundreds of enemies and can now simply relax and get some well-deserved rest. As the scrolling text explains, the harmony between man and nature has been restored. Good for you old chap.



SCREEN 5
It might have been an arduous journey (mainly due to *Growl*'s clunky controls and repetitive gameplay) but seeing all those animals disappear back into the wilderness makes it all worth it. Saying that though, what price do elephant tusks go for on eBay at the moment?